

Cofnod y Trafodion The Record of Proceedings

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

27/01/2016

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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

Suzy Davies	Ceidwadwyr Cymru Welsh Conservatives
Ann Jones	Llafur (Cadeirydd y Pwyllgor) Labour (Chair of the Committee)
David Rees	Llafur Labour
Aled Roberts	Democratiaid Rhyddfrydol Cymru Welsh Liberal Democrats
Rhodri Glyn Thomas	Plaid Cymru The Party of Wales
Simon Thomas	Plaid Cymru The Party of Wales

Eraill yn bresennol
Others in attendance

Simon Brown	Cyfarwyddwr Strategol, Estyn Strategic Director, Estyn
Steve Davies	Cyfarwyddwr, Safonau Ysgolion a'r Gweithlu, Llywodraeth Cymru Director, School Standards and Workforce, Welsh Government
Huw Lewis	Aelod Cynulliad, Llafur (y Gweinidog Addysg a Sgiliau) Assembly Member, Labour (Minister for Education and Skills)
Sarah Morgan	Arolygydd ei Mawrhydi, Estyn HM Inspector, Estyn
Huw Morris	Cyfarwyddwr Sgiliau, Addysg Uwch a Dysgu Gydol Oes, Llywodraeth Cymru Director, Skills, Higher Education and Lifelong Learning, Welsh Government
Meilyr Rowlands	Prif Arolygydd ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru HM Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales
Emma Williams	Dirprwy Gyfarwyddwr yr Is-adran Cymorth i Ddysgwyr, Llywodraeth Cymru

Deputy Director Support for Learners Division, Welsh
Government

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

Sarah Bartlett	Dirprwy Clerc Deputy Clerk
Michael Dauncey	Y Gwasanaeth Ymchwil Research Service
Marc Wyn Jones	Clerc Clerk
Gareth Rogers	Clerc Clerk

Dechreuodd y cyfarfod am 09:39.
The meeting began at 09:39.

Cyflwyniadau, Ymddiheuriadau a Dirprwyon
Introductions, Apologies and Substitutions

[1] **Ann Jones:** Good morning, everybody. Welcome to the Children, Young People and Education Committee. I'll place on record apologies for the late start; that's because there have been some traffic problems that delayed Members getting in. Members will join us as they're able to. We've had apologies from John Griffiths, from Keith Davies and from Lynne Neagle and there are no substitutes. So, we'll do the scrutiny between those of us who managed to get through the difficulties this morning.

Craffu ar Adroddiad Blynyddol Estyn 2014–2015
Scrutiny of Estyn's Annual Report 2014–2015

[2] **Ann Jones:** We'll move on to the next item on the agenda, which is the scrutiny of Estyn's annual report for 2014–15. Thanks very much for that. We're delighted to have the report and we're also delighted to have you with us. Perhaps, Meilyr, you can introduce yourself and your colleagues for the record and we'll go into some questions.

[3] **Mr Rowlands:** Yes. I'm Meilyr Rowlands, chief inspector for Estyn.

[4] **Mr Brown:** Simon Brown, strategic director, Estyn.

[5] **Ms Morgan:** Sarah Morgan. I'm a Her Majesty's inspector and I was project manager for the report.

[6] **Ann Jones:** Okay. Thanks very much for that. And thank you for the report.

[7] **Mr Rowlands:** Apologies from Claire Morgan, who would normally be here, but, because of bereavement, she can't be here. I'm very glad to have Sarah with us, as she was the project manager for the report.

[8] **Ann Jones:** Right, okay. Thanks very much for that. If we can, we will just go into some questions. If I could just start—. I want to start around comparisons made between years. The graph on page 18 of your annual report shows that both primary and secondary schools come within a range, based on where you judge them to be. But you then go on to say:

[9] 'None of these changes were statistically significant.'

[10] I wonder if you would just outline to what extent comparisons can be made between years based on the sample of schools that you inspect every year. I believe that you inspect a different cohort. So, I wonder if you'd just give us some outlines as to how we should treat the data, really.

[11] **Mr Rowlands:** Yes. I think people warned me not to do this—to explain this—but I think it is important that people understand. Clearly, we inspect something like a sixth of the schools in Wales every year. Clearly, the data for that year are accurate and it's an annual report. But, quite naturally, people ask, 'Can you compare'—and people do compare—'one year with another?' So, let's say, one year, last year, 70 per cent of schools were good or better and, this year, it's 75 per cent that are good or better: can you say that things have improved? On a very crude level, people will say, 'Well, of course you can—it was 70 per cent last year; it's 75 per cent this year', but, of course, the actual schools we inspected last year are completely different to the schools we inspected this year. So, some people would say, 'Well then you can't compare because they're completely different'. But that is the classic example of statistics. So, the answer is that, yes, you can compare different cohorts, but, strictly speaking, you must use statistics, and that's what we've tried to do on page 18—to show the statistics in the simplest possible graphical way.

[12] So, although, last year, primary went down a bit in terms of those schools that were good or better and, this year, they've gone up a little bit—and it's the other way around with secondary; last year they went up a little bit and this year they've gone down—all those changes were, in fact, within those error bars. So, what that means is that, in reality, you can be pretty sure that, overall, there hasn't been a lot of change in either primary or secondary.

[13] **Ann Jones:** Okay. Thanks very much. Your counterpart in England has made a statement—. I mean, he started off by saying that he knows very little about the Welsh education system and then went on to say that it was rather shambolic and in a bit of a mess—'in a bit of a mess' are my words. Do you have any views on the fact that (a) he's commenting on a system he doesn't know about and (b) is this the sort of thing we expect from inspectors from other countries?

[14] **Mr Rowlands:** I think it's an unwritten law that chief inspectors of different countries don't comment on other countries because, as you say, they wouldn't have the evidence, but I think it's an unwritten law and, you know, he's done what he's done. My understanding is that he denies saying that it was shambolic, but—

[15] **Simon Thomas:** It was on television.

[16] **Ann Jones:** Yes, yes.

[17] **Mr Rowlands:** If you're asking about comparisons between countries, we've just been talking about how difficult it is to actually compare year on year. Comparing different countries is particularly difficult. I mean, the statisticians won't do it at all in terms of GCSEs, for example, between Wales and England.

09:45

[18] I'm quite happy to talk to you about my opinion about that, if you want me to, because I think the GCSE comparison between Wales and England is actually a very important type of comparison. We all know about the Programme for International Student Assessment, of course.

[19] **Ann Jones:** Okay. So, it was an unwritten law that he has now decided

he will ignore, basically. Does it make life difficult for us in future, then, if we're going to have people without the proper information making sweeping statements? Does it put the inspection regime at a disadvantage, really? Are people going to believe anything that's going to be said for them?

[20] **Mr Rowlands:** I think comparing with different countries has advantages. I think it's important that we learn from other countries. Estyn very much believes in that. We've got very good relationships with Ofsted, actually. They've learnt from us, and we've learnt from them. We've got excellent relationships with Education Scotland, Northern Ireland and the Republic. In fact, in April, we're hosting a major international conference in Cardiff, with countries from all over Europe—France, Holland, Flanders—all coming to Wales to share their good practice. I think that's very important.

[21] **Ann Jones:** Okay. All right. Thanks. We'll probably touch on GCSEs later on in the questioning. Suzy, overall standards and trends in primary and secondary schools, you wanted to—.

[22] **Suzy Davies:** Yes, please. Bearing in mind that you've just said that, in terms of comparisons, there are no really significant differences between these schools and schools in other areas, is the information on the polarisation—i.e. more excellent schools and satisfactory schools—a matter of concern, or is that actually statistically insignificant as well?

[23] **Mr Rowlands:** Yes, I think that is a bit of a pattern. We've always had this polarisation, and I think that is a concern. It is true that the number of excellent schools seems to be increasing year on year. It is a concern. I think that gap between the excellent schools and those that are struggling is even more polarised in secondary than it is in primary. I think we've discussed that in this committee in the past. Why is that polarisation greater in secondary than in primary? I think it's not just a function of inspection, as you see it in lots of other indicators. So, for example, the gap between boys' performance and girls' performance seems to get wider as children get older. The gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers also seems to get wider as they get older. There seems to be a cumulative effect that starts, maybe, in primary school, but gets wider in secondary. I think the other factor in terms of this polarisation, possibly, is that secondary schools are bigger and more complex organisations than primary schools.

[24] **Suzy Davies:** Sorry to interrupt, but you do say that socioeconomic factors aren't critical in that.

[25] **Mr Rowlands:** No.

[26] **Suzy Davies:** So, how are some schools becoming excellent and some becoming unsatisfactory, bearing in mind the issue that you raised about boys and girls, just as one example, is going to be, pretty much, across all kinds of schools, isn't it?

[27] **Mr Rowlands:** Oh, yes. Certainly, if you're analysing what's going on with this polarisation, the standards are polarised, and why is that? Looking at the provision of schools in more detail, what we found was that that polarisation, in terms of provision, was greatest in the learning experiences and the teaching. So, when we inspect all the various elements of what a school delivers, those were the areas that came out worst and came out as the ones with greater polarisation and difference. If you then want to ask, 'Well, why are those different?', I guess you would have to go back to the next stage, which is the leadership. So, ultimately, we have little doubt that what makes the biggest difference in terms of what makes good provision in a school is good leadership.

[28] **Suzy Davies:** I think that's a really interesting point to make. I want to test it, though, against an observation that we had when we visited, as a committee, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 18 months ago now, when it was explained to us that, actually, generally, they're quite happy with the standards of school across Wales, but they'd identified significant differences of standards within schools—whether they're good or bad schools, it's what's going on within each one. So, do you have any observations of your own to make on that?

[29] **Mr Rowlands:** These are fascinating theories. They really are interesting. Europeans, I think, tend to say that the in-school variation in Wales is more significant than the between-school variation. We, certainly, as an inspectorate, see both of those. Certainly, there is great in-school variation. So, it does depend which teacher you will get. However, it's almost a characteristic—it is a characteristic of the better schools that they do manage to have greater consistency. So, that is one of the reasons why the good schools are good, and the excellent schools are excellent. It's that they do manage to have and to develop and encourage greater consistency within the school. However, as an inspectorate, we certainly see between-school variations. You would all know from your own authorities that some schools are absolutely fantastic; you couldn't get better in any country in the world,

but on the other hand, we have schools in special measures, sometimes within a short distance of one another. So, there's undoubtedly between-school variation in Wales that is very significant.

[30] I do wonder why international comparisons seem to say that that is less important in Wales than in other countries. The only hypothesis that I have is that we do have a very straightforward, uniform education system in Wales—you know, comprehensive schools everywhere—while other countries have a more stratified system, possibly, of schools, and that might mean that the between-school variation might be even greater than it is in Wales.

[31] **Suzy Davies:** Well, that could be an answer. I think the OECD also said that it is more a question of equality of access and the way that pupils are treated, rather than their specific academic achievements as such. So, maybe it was a bit of apples and pears in there as well.

[32] But you just mentioned that a significant number—and it is a significant number—of schools here are still in special measures, primary and secondary, but primarily secondary schools, I think. What does that say about the trends in education at the moment? If we're at a standstill in primary and secondary schools, notwithstanding slight variations, should we be worried that we're more or less at a standstill on the numbers in special measures as well? Or, is that just a vagary of the change in the inspection system, which, again, will change in the next set of changes? Sorry, that was badly phrased, but—.

[33] **Mr Rowlands:** The standstill thing, I think, is a very interesting point, because I've just said that, in terms of our statistics, the number of good or better schools is virtually on a standstill. That doesn't mean, though, that there isn't improvement—and that seems, maybe, a bit of a contradiction—and I think the reason for that is that expectations are actually increasing all the time. So, expectations in society are increasing all the time, but also the inspection criteria are getting tougher every year.

[34] So, if you just look at this current cycle of inspections from 2010, we've added to what we were inspecting initially, the literacy framework, then we looked, in addition, at the numeracy framework, then we looked at the pupil deprivation grant. We've also made the timing of inspections less predictable. So, all those things actually make getting good grades in an inspection harder. So, although the actual level seems to be level, it still reflects, I think, an improvement overall.

[35] **Ms Morgan:** Can I also add that the schools that are in significant improvement and in special measures, so obviously the statutory category—? We do find, and you'll see in the report, some examples of those schools that have been in special measures or significant improvement and have made exceptionally good progress and have come out. Identifying those schools in those categories often helps them significantly, obviously, in moving forward. If they have been, I think in your words, stuck a little bit, it attracts a lot of support for them, a lot of movement—sometimes movement in staff and leadership—that actually moves those schools forward quite considerably. When we go back to visit them every term, obviously we monitor that progress very carefully and we identify that progress, and you have some other schools in special measures that have made good progress and have come out. I think sometimes we forget that the numbers moving in and out are not constantly the same schools. They are different schools moving in and out of special measures. So, although the numbers look similar, there is movement out of those all the time.

[36] **Suzy Davies:** Would it be fair to say that—sorry, I don't want to take too much more time—? Were the inspection regime not to change in the next six years, and I appreciate that it's likely to, but if it were not to, when you went into the same schools on the second cycle, you would expect far fewer schools to still be in special measures, because they would have moved on.

[37] **Mr Rowlands:** Yes.

[38] **Suzy Davies:** I mean, there's always the possibility that some new ones might have fallen into it, but if the boats are rising slightly, then you would expect fewer to be in special measures the second time around.

[39] **Mr Rowlands:** We would, and there's no doubt that it is a concern that so many schools are going into special measures and significant improvement—still. The numbers are fairly small in terms of statistics, and it's difficult to give a trend on it, but there's no doubt that it's a huge concern. No inspector ever likes to put a school in special measures or significant improvement. It's a huge concern and we would certainly want to see that number decrease in the next cycle. The definitions of special measures and significant improvement are in legislation, so that shouldn't change with the new inspection cycle, to be honest. So, we would expect to see that better, but to be honest, we would want to see it improve within this current cycle. It is a disappointment—we don't use that word very often—but

it is a disappointment when we put a school into that category. Why hasn't it been identified by either the local authority or regional consortium before? You know, we come in every six or seven years. Why hasn't it been identified? Or if it has been identified, why hasn't there been sufficient support for the school to maybe not become a great school, but come out of those kinds of categories?

[40] **Suzy Davies:** Okay. My final question on this—

[41] **Christine Chapman:** Hang on a minute because Aled's got a point on that. So, Aled, do you want to come in?

[42] **Aled Roberts:** Rydych chi newydd ddweud mai un achos pryder i chi yw bod dros chwarter o ysgolion o fewn y categori statudol o ran ysgolion uwchradd— rwy'n meddwl 10 allan o 37. Rwyf jest eisiau gofyn i chi ynglŷn â'r pwynt a wnaethoch chi olaf, felly. Mae yna hunanasesiad sy'n cael ei gyflawni cyn i'r arolwg gymryd lle. Faint o'r 10 allan o'r 37 yr oedd yr hunanasesiadau yn dweud a oedd yn disgwyl bod yna broblem o ran safonau? Wrth feddwl bod y wybodaeth yna yn cael ei rhannu â'r awdurdod lleol a'r consortia, faint o'r 10 a gafodd sioc eu bod nhw'n cael eu rhoi mewn mesurau arbennig? A oes gennych chi bryder achos bod cyfundrefn categoreiddio'r Llywodraeth yn dibynnu ar hunanasesiad? A oes yna broblem yma, os nad ydy'r ysgolion yn ymwybodol o'r ffaith nad yw eu safonau nhw yn ddigon da, o ran a ddylem ni gwestiynu'r holl gyfundrefn o gategoreiddio?

Aled Roberts: You've just said that it's a cause of concern for you that over a quarter of schools are within the statutory category in terms of secondary schools—I think 10 out of 37. I just want to ask you about the point you made at the end, therefore. There is self-evaluation that is undertaken before the inspection takes place. How many of the 10 out of 37 schools did the self-assessments say were expecting that there would be a problem with standards? Given that that information is shared with the local authority and the consortia, how many of those 10 schools had a shock that they were being placed in special measures? Are you concerned because the Government's categorisation regime relies on self-evaluation? Is there a problem here, if these schools aren't aware of the fact that their standards aren't good enough, in terms of whether we should be questioning the whole regime of categorisation?

[43] Yr ail gwestiwn: dim ond pump [44] The second question: only five

allan o 11 ysgol a gododd allan o'r categori statudol y llynedd. A oes yna broblem ynglŷn â'r gefnogaeth sydd ar gael i'r ysgolion yna, o ran bod llai na hanner ohonyn nhw wedi llwyddo i ddod allan o'r categori ar ôl blwyddyn?

10:00

[45] **Mr Rowlands:** Ni fedraf ateb y cwestiwn yn union a dweud faint o ysgolion a oedd wedi cael sioc. Fe fedraf i ddod yn ôl. Fe fedrwn ni fynd yn ôl a rhoi'r ffeithiau yna i chi. Rŷch chi'n iawn i ganolbwyntio ar bwysigrwydd hunanasesu a hunanarfarnu—mae hynny yn bwysig. Mae e yn amrywio. Mae rhai ysgolion yn meddwl eu bod nhw'n well nag ydyn nhw a rhai yn meddwl eu bod nhw'n waeth nag ydyn nhw. Yn sicr, mae yna dueddiad gyda'r ysgolion sy'n mynd mewn i gategori i fod yn anymwybodol o hynny—nid yr ysgolion i gyd, mae rhai yn ymwybodol eu bod nhw mewn trafferthion, ond nid yw pob un. O ran beth yn union yw'r ffigurau, bydd yn rhaid i fi fynd yn ôl i'r swyddfa i gadarnhau. Mae'r niferoedd yma yn amrywio tipyn: naw neu 10 eleni ond dim ond un y llynedd. So, mae e'n amrywio. Mae tua phump neu chwech, rwy'n meddwl, ar gyfartaledd o'r ysgolion uwchradd yn mynd mewn i gategoriau. Mae rhai ohonyn nhw'n ymwybodol; mae rhai ohonyn nhw ddim. Mewn rhai achosion, mae'r awdurdod yn gwybod ac yn cytuno'n llwyr â'n

out of 11 schools came out of the statutory category last year. Is there a problem regarding the support that is available for those schools, in that fewer than half of them have succeeded in coming out of the category after a year?

Mr Rowlands: I can't answer that question specifically in terms of how many of the schools were surprised. I could get back to you and we could provide you with those figures. You're right to concentrate on the importance of self-evaluation and self-assessment—those are important and they do vary. Some schools believe that they are better than they are and some believe that they are worse than they actually are. Certainly, there is a tendency with schools that are placed in a category to be unaware of that—not all of them, some are very aware that they are facing difficulties, but not all are. On what exactly the figures are, I'll have to go back to the office to confirm them. These numbers do vary a fair bit: nine or 10 this year, but only one last year. So, it does vary. I think that it's, on average, around five or six secondary schools that are placed in these categories. Some are aware; some aren't. In certain cases, the authority is aware and they agree entirely with our evaluation; in other cases, they are not as aware. It does depend on the individual school. It is a cause for

arfarniad ni; mewn achosion eraill, nid ydyn nhw mor ymwybodol. Mae'n dibynnu ar yr ysgol unigol. Mae e'n bryder bod yr ysgolion yma yn cymryd cymaint o amser i ddod allan o'r categorïau. Mae nifer ohonyn nhw yn dod allan—mae hynny'n beth da i'w weld—ond po waethaf yw'r problemau, mwyaf o amser mae e'n cymryd. Mae'n cymryd rhyw flwyddyn, rhyw flwyddyn a hanner, i ddod allan o welliant sylweddol ac mae'n gallu cymryd blynyddoedd i ddod o fesurau arbennig. Felly, mae hynny yn gwneud i rywun feddwl mor bwysig yw e i wneud yn siŵr nad yw ysgolion yn mynd mewn i'r categorïau yma yn y lle cyntaf. Felly, mae yna rôl bwysig iawn, rwy'n meddwl, gan yr awdurdodau a'r consortia i wneud yn siŵr nad yw ysgolion yn llithro i lawr, achos mae e mor anodd i ddod allan.

[46] **Aled Roberts:** Felly, yn gyffredinol, wrth ystyried beth rŷch chi'n ei ddweud ynglŷn â pha mor anodd ydy o i rai ysgolion wella, o achos lle maen nhw'n dechrau—y pwynt maen nhw'n dechrau oddi arno fo—a ydych chi'n eithaf bodlon felly efo'r gefnogaeth sy'n cael ei chynnig gan yr awdurdodau lleol a'r consortia? Neu a ydym ni mewn sefyllfa lle mae achos o hyd inni fod yn bryderus ynglŷn ag ansawdd y gefnogaeth sydd yn cael ei rhoi i'r ysgolion yma wrth dderbyn, hwyrach, eu bod nhw'n wynebu heriau eithaf sylweddol?

concern that these schools do take so much time to emerge from that categorisation. Some of them do—that's a very positive thing to see—but the more intensive the problems, the longer it takes to actually overcome them. It takes 12 to 18 months to emerge from a category where you need significant improvement and it can take years to come out of special measures. So, that would make one think how important it is to ensure that schools don't fall into those categories in the first place. So, there is an important role, I think, for the local authorities and the consortia to ensure that schools don't slip down into these categories, because it's so difficult to get out of them.

Aled Roberts: Therefore, in general, considering what you've said about how difficult it is for some schools to improve, because of where they started—their starting point—are you quite satisfied with the support that is being offered by the local authorities and the consortia? Or are we in a situation where there is still a cause for concern in terms of the quality of the support that is provided to schools in accepting, perhaps, that they are facing quite significant challenges?

[47] **Mr Rowlands:** Wel, rŷch chi'n gwybod—fe wnaiff Simon roi ychydig bach mwy o wybodaeth am hyn—fod gennym ni bryder am nifer o awdurdodau. Maen nhw wedi cymryd amser i ddod allan o fesurau arbennig eu hunain. Rŷm ni ar fin cychwyn cylch o arolygiadau o gonsortia hefyd, ac rwy'n siŵr y bydd gan Simon fwy i'w ddweud am hyn.

Mr Rowlands: Well, you will know—Simon can provide a little more information on this—that we are concerned about a number of authorities. They have taken some time to come out of special measures themselves. We are about to start a cycle of inspections of consortia, and I'm sure that Simon will have more to say on that.

[48] **Mr Brown:** I think, and you may recall, that we appeared before the committee before about the regional consortia remit work that we'd done. One of the issues we said was that we felt that the consortia were getting better at challenging the schools, which refers to the point that Meilyr made about the quality of the self-assessment of the schools and what the challenge adviser's judgment was on the school prior to our inspections. We picked up that they were a little bit out of kilter, but it was an improving picture. But the one area that we said in our remit that we undertook last year—in fact, it was this time last year that we were doing the remit work—was that we were more concerned about the quality of the support that the consortia were able to put in. Starting this term, we are inspecting the consortia. Running through from February until June, we've got a series of inspections of the four consortia and one of the hypotheses we'll be testing out there is the quality of the support that the consortia, working with the local authorities, can give to schools—not just schools that have gone into special measures or significant improvement, but what they can do preventatively to prevent the schools getting into that situation in the first place. So, that's an area that we shall be focusing on. And, obviously, we'll be reporting back to the next Minister towards the end of the summer term.

[49] **Ann Jones:** Suzy.

[50] **Suzy Davies:** Of those schools that did come out of special measures, in your view, how critical was the input, at that stage, of the consortia in local authorities? How significant were they in seeing the improvement achieved?

[51] **Mr Rowlands:** That's a really good question. You are down to fairly individualised stories really. The numbers that we're talking about are fairly small. There are examples where the regional consortia or the local authority had a really important input and, in other cases, it's been down to a

complete change in the leadership. There are all kinds of things.

[52] **Suzy Davies:** But that's useful to know.

[53] **Mr Rowlands:** Yes, it is. Each one is almost its own little story. I think that's why we've tried to put examples of good practice into the annual report and also on our website, but also all the stories of schools that aren't particularly good actually, but have improved a lot from special measures. We did, about two years ago, a whole report on 12 secondary schools and their improvement journeys and we deliberately took the examples of, not just excellent schools, but some schools starting in a category and improving, and trying to identify the kinds of strategies that would help them. I think there is a pattern in terms of the strategies that are needed to come out of a category. To put it very crudely, you need to start with the basics: things like literacy and numeracy, basic literacy and numeracy, behaviour and attendance—those sorts of things. You've got to be able to crawl before you can walk—that sort of thing. We tried to identify those. You'd have a similar sort of pattern in primary, I think, but the personnel who provide the impetus for that change will vary from school to school.

[54] **Suzy Davies:** That's lovely, thank you. Thank you, Chair.

[55] **Ann Jones:** On literacy and numeracy, Rhodri.

[56] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Diolch yn fawr iawn, Gadeirydd. Mae gwella safonau llythrennedd a rhifedd yn ddwy o dair blaenoriaeth hir dymor y Llywodraeth yma. Mae gwella cymhwysedd digidol nawr wedi'i ychwanegu at hynny. Rydych yn adrodd yn eich adroddiad fod dwy ran o dair o ysgolion mewn gwirionedd yn dda neu'n well o ran y safonau hynny ac, yn gyffredinol, fod pethau'n gwella. Ond mae hynny'n gadael treian o'r ysgolion lle nad yw'r safonau'n dda neu'n well. Beth yw'r gobeithion o ran gwella'r safonau yn yr ysgolion hynny?

Rhodri Glyn Thomas: Thank you very much, Chair. Improving standards in literacy and numeracy are two of the three long-term priorities of this Government. Improving digital competence has now been added to that. You state in your report that two thirds of schools really are good or better in terms of those standards and, in general, that things are improving. But that leaves a third of schools where the standards aren't good or better. What are the hopes in terms of improving standards in those schools?

[57] **Mr Rowlands:** Os ych chi'n sôn yn benodol am llythrennedd a rhifedd, rwy'n meddwl bod yna obeithion da fod pethau'n mynd i wella. Rwy'n meddwl y byddem yn gwahaniaethu rhwng llythrennedd a rhifedd a byddem hefyd yn gwahaniaethu rhwng llythrennedd a rhifedd sylfaenol a llythrennedd a rhifedd ar lefel uwch. Felly, mae'r patrwm yn weddol gymhleth. Mae yna fwy o gynnydd wedi'i wneud mewn llythrennedd sylfaenol, er enghraifft, na rhifedd. Mae yna yn dal problemau, wrth gwrs, hyd yn oed mewn llythrennedd sylfaenol, fel yr oeddech yn ei ddweud, mewn tua threian o ysgolion nid yw safon llythrennedd, ysgrifennu na chywirdeb ysgrifennu yn ddigon da.

Mr Rowlands: If you are talking specifically about literacy and numeracy, I think that things are looking positive in terms of improvement. I think that we would differentiate between literacy and numeracy and we would also differentiate between basic literacy and numeracy and higher level literacy and numeracy. So, the pattern is relatively complex. There has been more progress in basic literacy, for example, than there has been in numeracy. There are problems that remain, of course, even in basic literacy, as you said, in around a third of schools the standard of literacy, writing and the accuracy of writing simply aren't good enough.

[58] Mae angen ar nifer o ysgolion i ganolbwyntio o hyd ar y pethau mwyaf sylfaenol hynny. Ond, yn sicr, mae yna fwy o sylw wedi'i roi, oherwydd y fframwaith ac yn y blaen, ac mae'n glir bod yna welliant, yn enwedig mewn ysgolion cynradd a hefyd yn y math o gymorth y mae ysgolion uwchradd yn ei roi i blant sydd yn syrthio tu ôl o ran llythrennedd a rhifedd. Mae'n fwy o her gyda rhifedd. Mae pobl yn aml yn gofyn, 'Pam hynny?', ond rwy'n meddwl bod nifer o resymau am hynny: dechreuodd y gwaith ar llythrennedd cyn y gwaith ar rhifedd ac rwy'n meddwl, ar y cyfan a gan gyffredinol, fod athrawon yn hapusach ac yn fwy cyfforddus gyda gwaith llythrennedd nag ydyn nhw

A number of schools still need to concentrate on those fundamental issues. But, certainly, more attention has been given, because of the framework and so on, and there's clearly been an improvement, particularly in primary schools and also in the kinds of support that secondary schools provide for pupils who do fall behind in terms of literacy and numeracy. It's more of a challenge in terms of numeracy. People often ask, 'Why is that the case?', and I think there are a number of reasons for that: the work on literacy started before the work on numeracy and I think that, on the whole and speaking in very general terms, teachers are happier and more comfortable with literacy work than

gyda gwaith rhifedd. Rwy'n meddwl bod y gwaith digidol yn dod ar ôl llythrennedd a rhifedd hefyd.

[59] Y maes, rwy'n meddwl, y mae angen i, fwy neu lai, bob ysgol ganolbwyntio arno nawr ydy'r uwch fedrau llythrennedd a rhifedd—y sgiliau meddwl a'r gallu i resymegu o ran defnyddio geiriau a rhifau. Mae'r medrau hynny'n hollol ganolog i bopeth rŷm ni'n ei wneud o fewn addysg. Dyma'r medrau y mae'n rhaid i bobl ifanc eu cael—y medrau meddwl lefel uchel hyn—i gael swyddi da ac er mwyn cael canlyniadau da mewn arholiadau. Hefyd, dyna beth y mae PISA yn ei fesur yn ogystal.

[60] Felly, mae angen i ysgolion ganolbwyntio ar ddatblygu'r medrau hynny. Mae'r fframwaith llythrennedd a rhifedd yn help i wneud hynny achos maen nhw'n cael eu cynnwys yn y fframweithiau hynny ac y mae'r TGAU newydd yn y Gymraeg, Saesneg a mathemateg hefyd yn gymorth i ddatblygu'r medrau yna. Felly, mae'r meini hynny yn eu lle ac y mae hynny'n beth da ac yn rhywbeth gobeithiol.

[61] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Rŷch chi'n sôn am y gwahaniaeth rhwng llythrennedd a rhifedd a bod yna fwy o gynnydd o ran llythrennedd ac rŷch chi'n gwbl gywir i ddweud bod y pwyslais yna wedi bod yna'n hirach nag yw e o ran rhifedd. Mae'n sicr yn

they are with numeracy. I think that the digital work is falling behind literacy and numeracy.

The area that I think, more or less, every school needs to concentrate on now is those higher level skills in terms of literacy and numeracy—those cognitive skills and the ability to rationalise and make well-thought-out decisions in terms of words and numbers. Those skills are entirely central to everything that we do within education. These are the skills that young people need—these high-level thinking skills—so that they can access good employment and in order to attain good results in their examinations. Also, that is what PISA assesses too.

So, schools need to concentrate on developing those skills. The literacy and numeracy framework is certainly helping in doing that because they are included within those frameworks and the new GCSEs in English, Welsh and mathematics will also assist in developing those skills. Therefore, those aspects are all in place and that is very positive and is something hopeful.

Rhodri Glyn Thomas: You talk about the difference between literacy and numeracy, and there's been more progress in literacy and you're quite right to say that that emphasis has been there longer than it has for numeracy. Certainly in the primary

y sector cynradd fod athrawon, hwyrach, yn fwy cysurus wrth ddatblygu llythrennedd nag yn nhw gyda rhifedd. Ond rŷch chi'n sôn yn yr adroddiad hefyd fod hyn i raddau yn ymwneud â diffyg hyder disgyblion wrth drafod rhifedd. Pam fod yna ddiffyg hyder yna o ran rhifedd yn hytrach na llythrennedd?

sector, it seems that teachers are more comfortable in developing literacy than numeracy. But you state in the report as well that this, to an extent, relates to a lack of confidence among pupils in discussing numeracy. Why is there a lack of confidence in terms of numeracy rather than literacy?

[62] **Mr Rowlands:** Rwy'n meddwl, yn gyffredinol, fod y boblogaeth—p'un ai eich bod chi'n siarad am unigolion, rhieni, plant neu athrawon—ar y cyfan yn llai hyderus gyda rhifedd. Rŷch chi'n sôn am ysgolion cynradd, ond byddwn i'n dweud ei fod yn wir am ysgolion uwchradd yn ogystal. Hynny ydy, mae'r athrawon gwyddoniaeth a mathemateg yn hyderus o ran defnyddio rhifedd, ond beth am yr athrawon eraill? A ydyn nhw'n gyfforddus yn eu gallu eu hunain o ran rhifedd? Ar y cyfan, byddwn i'n dweud eu bod yn llai hyderus nag ydynt mewn llythrennedd. Mae yna lai o gyfleodd ar draws y cwricwlwm i ddefnyddio mathemateg a rhifedd na llythrennedd, er enghraifft.

Mr Rowlands: I think, generally speaking, the population—whether you're talking of individuals, parents, children or teachers—is less confident with numeracy. You mentioned primary schools, but I would also say that it is true of secondary schools. For example, science and maths teachers may be confident in numeracy, but what about the other teachers? Are they as comfortable in terms of their own ability in numeracy? Generally speaking, I would say that they are less confident than they would be in literacy. There are fewer opportunities across the curriculum to use mathematics and numeracy than there are with literacy, for example.

[63] **Ann Jones:** I've got David, who has a point on this, and then Simon and I'll then come back to you, Rhodri.

[64] **David Rees:** On this particular point, you talk about the fact that the skills of the teaching workforce might not be able to deliver some of the numeracy issues. Does that worry you for the future because, obviously, with the Donaldson curriculum review coming in, where there's going to be a good emphasis on themes across the curriculum—and numeracy must clearly be one of those, particularly in primary schools—what are your concerns about the skills levels in those subject areas to be able to ensure pupils'

confidence—and this is not just about the pupils’ confidence—and the teachers’ confidence in delivering numeracy across all levels?

[65] **Mr Rowlands:** I think you’re right. With all of these developments, we must look at the development of teachers side by side. My understanding is that that is the idea behind the new deal—that there is going to be much more emphasis on staff development. So, you need it in literacy; you definitely need it in numeracy; but most of all, I think you probably need it in digital literacy. We’ve made that point, but I think there’s considerable consensus, particularly over the need for numeracy and digital competence.

[66] **David Rees:** Through your inspections, have you seen some serious concerns regarding the level of standards of those in teaching posts in those subject areas?

10:15

[67] **Mr Rowlands:** I think you can infer that from what is presented to children. Simon can help me out on the digital side of things, but, generally speaking, children pick up quite well on what they have been taught in primary and secondary, but it tends to be the fairly simple, straightforward things that they’re being given such as, you know, using PowerPoint and word processors, and they’re not doing the more difficult things to do with databases and creating their own spreadsheets and those sorts of things, because the teachers themselves don’t have those skills.

[68] **Mr Brown:** It is an issue. As you say, it is an issue of teacher competency and confidence. I think that, in key stage 2 and key stage 3—. In primary, we report that teachers are very good at doing the sort of basic information and communications technology stuff with children, and quite a few of the children have their own confidence in taking it a bit further, because children are quite confident in the use of ICT generally, but perhaps teachers then don’t extend them to using, as Meilyr said, some of the things like spreadsheets, data modelling, et cetera. When they get through to key stage 3 and secondary schools, again, where they have taught ICT, it tends to be word processing, use of PowerPoint and use of basic spreadsheets, but the area that we’ve found is more of a shortcoming is those skills being used by other teachers and other subjects. So, it’s how to use spreadsheets in science, and how you use databases in history, for example.

[69] **David Rees:** I appreciate that.

[70] **Mr Brown:** That is something that the work that's going on with Donaldson in terms of digital competency—. That is something that the group is very aware of—the need for training.

[71] **David Rees:** I appreciate that, but you moved on to digital competency there. I was looking at numeracy.

[72] **Ann Jones:** Yes, yes, we've got some questions on that at the end.

[73] **David Rees:** My concerns are numeracy.

[74] **Mr Rowlands:** Yes, indeed.

[75] **Ms Morgan:** May I go back to the numeracy? I think one of the things you asked particularly about was primary. I think one of the most important things in primary is that it's much easier for a teacher in a primary school to bring numeracy into the whole curriculum—and we see many examples of teachers who are able to do that very skilfully and very competently—and ensure that the children are developing those skills at the same level in other subjects as they are in mathematics. I think one of the problems we perhaps see happening more is that once the children get up into the secondary system, the importance of delivering numeracy across the curriculum, which is what we're talking about here, is harder because they're not with the same teacher all the time. A teacher has perhaps been a specialist in their subject—so, a specialist in history, let's say—and there's still an expectation that they will deliver the children's numeracy and support that development, but that's a much harder thing to do. I think, in terms of planning, that's perhaps where we see the difficulties and the lack of confidence that we've talked about. So, whereas in primary school they know that's the expectation, that becomes harder in secondary. It's a little bit like what Meilyr was saying earlier about that gap getting a little bigger as children move on. So, I think that's one of the issues that perhaps we haven't mentioned.

[76] **David Rees:** So, you're more confident at primary level than you are at secondary level at this point in time.

[77] **Ms Morgan:** I think it's about confidence, but it's also about that ability to have a child with you all day, from 9 o'clock in the morning till 3 o'clock in the afternoon, and to be able to say, 'Well, I know what they're

doing in maths; I can use that in their science lesson; I can use that in their design and technology lesson'. So, it's easier for it to be joined up, if you like. That's something that secondary schools are getting their heads around, but it's bound to take a longer time because they're more complex institutions.

[78] **Ann Jones:** Okay. Right, I'm lost now as to where we are. I've got Simon, and then I've got to come back to Rhodri to finish his.

[79] **Simon Thomas:** Jest un cwestiwn penodol iawn ynglŷn â hwn. Un o'r camau y mae'r Llywodraeth wedi eu cymryd yn ddiweddar i fynd i'r afael â'r diffyg hyder hwn yw mynnu bod TGAU B mewn mathemateg gan bob un sy'n cymhwyso yng Nghymru fel athro. Hyd y gwn i, nid yw hynny'n rhwystro rhywun rhag mynd i gymhwyso yn Lloegr a dod yn ôl i ddysgu yng Nghymru, sydd yn wendid, efallai. Ond er ei bod yn fuan, a ydych chi wedi gweld unrhyw arwydd bod hyn yn cael effaith ar newid, efallai, diwylliant a'r agweddau diwylliannol sydd gennym ni tuag at fathemateg, mewn ffordd, a'r ofn hwnnw sydd gan bobl?

[80] **Mr Rowlands:** I fod yn onest, na. Nid wyf yn credu bod yna arwydd clir o hynny. Byddai'n rhaid imi fynd yn ôl, efallai, a chribinio drwy'r adroddiadau hyfforddi athrawon cychwynnol yn fwy agos. Ond, mae unrhyw strategaeth o'r math hwnnw, hyd yn oed os yw e'n llwyddiannus, yn mynd i gymryd amser maith i fwydo i mewn i'r system, fel eich bod chi'n medru sylwi arni, oherwydd bod nifer yr athrawon newydd gymhwyso

Simon Thomas: Just one very specific question on this. One of the steps that the Government has taken recently to address this lack of confidence is to insist that everyone who qualifies as a teacher in Wales has a B in GCSE maths. As far as I am aware, that doesn't prevent someone from going to qualify in England and returning to teach in Wales, which is a weakness, perhaps. However, even though these are early days, have you seen any sign that this is having an impact on changing, perhaps, the culture and those cultural attitudes we have towards mathematics, in a way, and that fear that people have?

Mr Rowlands: To be honest, no. I don't think that there is any clear sign of that. I would have to go back, perhaps, and go through all the initial teacher training reports in greater detail. However, any strategy of that sort, even if it is successful, is going to take a very long time to filter through the system, so that it would make a noticeable difference, because the number of newly qualified teachers coming into the

sy'n dod i mewn i'r system yn gymharol fach. Felly, nid yw hi'n amlwg eto. Wrth gwrs, mae'n syniad da ei gwneud, ac mae'n cyfrannu at y peth i gyd. Mae'n beth pwysig bod hynny'n digwydd, ond nid yw wedi gwneud gwahaniaeth mawr hyd yma.

system is relatively small. So, it isn't apparent as of yet. But, certainly, it is a good idea, and it does contribute to the bigger picture. It's very important that that happens, but it hasn't made a major difference as of yet.

[81] **Ann Jones:** Okay, Rhodri, do you want to—*[Inaudible.]*

[82] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Dim ond i ddod â'r adran yma i ben. Rŷch chi wedi cyfeirio at hyn, ond, os caf i gyfeirio yn benodol ato, yn eich adroddiad, rŷch chi'n sôn, o ran yr ysgolion cynradd, fod yr ysgolion hynny sydd yn perfformio orau o ran datblygu sgiliau llythrennedd a rhifedd yn ysgolion lle nad ydyn nhw'n cadw'n rhy gaeth at y cynlluniau gwaith. Ac yna, pan ydych chi'n mynd i'r uwchradd, rŷch chi'n dweud mai un o'r diffygion yn y fan honno ydy'r diffyg o ran cynlluniau gwaith. Rwy'n tybio mai'r rheswm am hynny ydy'r ateb yr oedd Sarah Morgan yn ei roi i David Rees yn gynharach, sef, yn yr ysgol gynradd, rŷch chi'n gallu ei ymestyn ar draws y cwricwlwm. Un athro gan fwyaf sydd gan y plant, lle, yn yr uwchradd, mae yna ddosbarthiadau penodol gydag athrawon penodol, felly mae mwy o angen am y cynllun gwaith. Ond mae yna ryw ychydig o wrthgyferbyniad yn y ddau ddatganiad.

Rhodri Glyn Thomas: Just to bring this section to a close. You've referred to this, but, if I could refer to it specifically, in your report, you state that, in primary schools, those schools that are performing best in developing literacy and numeracy skills are schools where they don't keep too rigidly to the work plans. And then, when you get to the secondary sector, you say that one of the deficiencies there is the lack of work plans. I assume that the reason for that is the answer that Sarah Morgan gave to David Rees earlier, which is that, in the primary sector, you can expand it across the curriculum. The children usually have a single teacher, whereas, in the secondary sector, there are specific classes with specific teachers, so there is more of a need for a work plan. But there is a slight contradiction in the two statements there.

[83] **Mr Rowlands:** Rŷch chi'n iawn; mae oherwydd bod strwythurau ysgol gynradd yn hollol wahanol i strwythur ysgol uwchradd. Beth sy'n hanfodol

Mr Rowlands: You are right; it is because the primary schools' structures are entirely different to those in the secondary sector. What

mewn ysgol uwchradd ydy, oherwydd bod gyda chi nifer o athrawon yn dysgu disgyblion, mae'n rhaid cael cynllun o ryw fath i sicrhau bod y cynnydd y mae'r plant yn ei wneud yn cael ei gynllunio. Felly, mae rhaid cael cynllun clir, ac mae'r cynllunio yna weithiau yn ddiffygiol.

is crucial in secondary schools is that, because you have a number of teachers teaching pupils, you must have a plan of some sort in place to ensure that the progress made by pupils is properly planned. Therefore, you have to have a clear plan in place, and that planning, on occasion, is deficient.

[84] Beth, rwy'n meddwl, yr ydym ni'n ei ddweud am gynradd ydy nid nad ydyn nhw'n dilyn eu cynllun gwaith eu hunain, ond eu bod nhw yn defnyddio tipyn o greadigrwydd, ac maen nhw'n arloesol yn y ffordd maen nhw'n edrych ar y cwricwlwm yn ei gyfanrwydd. Nid eu bod nhw'n creu cynllun gwaith a ddim yn glynu wrtho, ond eu bod nhw'n edrych ar y cwricwlwm fel cyfanwaith ac yn edrych arno fe mewn ffordd greadigol.

I think what we're saying in the primary sector is not that they aren't following their own work programmes, but that they are using some creativity, and they are innovative in the way they look at the curriculum in its entirety. It's not that they are drawing up work programmes and not adhering to them, but that they are looking at the curriculum in its entirety and looking at it in creative terms.

[85] Peth arall mae ysgolion cynradd yn ei wneud yn arbennig o dda, rwy'n meddwl—y rhai gorau, beth bynnag—ydy—ac mae hyn yn wir am ysgolion uwchradd—os oes gyda chi gynllun gwerau ac mae rhywbeth yn codi yn y wers, rydych chi'n teimlo'n ddigon hyderus i adael y cynllun gwerau hynny. Fyddech chi ddim yn gadael beth rydych chi wedi ei gynllunio am y tymor i gyd ac anwybyddu hynny, ond os yw'r cyfle yn codi—rhyw gyfle arbennig yn codi—mewn gwerau, mae'n bwysig bod gyda chi'r hyder i anwybyddu'r cynllun gwerau yna a mynd ar ôl rhywbeth arbennig. Roeddwn i'n

Another thing that primary schools do particularly well, I think—the best primary schools, at least—is that—and this is true, to some extent, of secondary schools also—if you do have a lesson plan and something arises within that lesson, you feel confident enough to actually veer from that lesson plan. You wouldn't actually abandon all your plans for the whole term because of that, but if an opportunity arises—a particular opportunity arises—within a lesson, then it's important that you should have the confidence to ignore that lesson plan and to pursue that particular issue. I saw that happening

gweld hynny'n digwydd yn y gwersi gorau, yn gyrradd ac yn uwchradd.

in the best lessons in the primary and secondary sectors.

[86] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Mae'n ddrwg gen i. Un cwestiwn yn dilyn ar hynny o ran yr ysgolion cynradd felly, a thybio bod y traean nad yw'n cyrraedd safonau 'da' a 'gwell' yn tueddu i fod yn gyfyngedig o ran y ffordd maen nhw'n datblygu'r sgiliau yma, sut mae modd ymestyn hynny a dangos y creadigrwydd rŷch chi'n sôn amdano fe? A ydy'n golygu hyfforddi'r staff, neu a ydy'n golygu bod rhaid cael newid meddylfryd a newid staff yn yr ysgol?

Rhodri Glyn Thomas: Apologies. One question following on from that in terms of those primary schools, therefore, and assuming that the third that are not reaching those better standards tend to be restricted in the way that they develop these skills, how can you expand that and demonstrate the creativity you mentioned? Does it mean training staff, or does it mean that there needs to be a change in the mindset and a change of staff in the schools?

[87] **Mr Rowlands:** Nid oes dim un ateb hawdd. Mae'n rhaid inni wneud yr holl bethau hyn, onid oes? Mae'n rhaid i'r awdurdodau a'r consortia hybu'r dulliau gorau o addysgu. Mae'n rhaid cael arweinyddion sy'n deall beth yw addysgu da. Rŷm ni wedi gweld hynny yn arbennig, er enghraifft, yn y cyfnod sylfaen, sef ei bod yn bwysig bod y prifathro yn cefnogi ac yn deall beth yw arfer da yn y cyfnod sylfaen. Mae eisiau hyfforddi ar athrawon, ac mae angen hefyd i gyrff fel Estyn ddweud yn glir, 'Wel, rydym ni yn disgwyl gweld creadigrwydd mewn cynllunio'. Felly, mae gyda ni i gyd gyfraniad i'w wneud, rwy'n meddwl, er mwyn gweld y gwelliannau yma.

Mr Rowlands: There's no simple solution to this. We need to do all of those things, don't we? The authorities and the consortia need to encourage best practice in education. We must have leaders who understand what good education looks like, and we've seen that particularly in the foundation phase, in that it's very important that the headteacher supports and understands best practice in the foundation phase. Teachers do need training, but there is also a need for organisations such as Estyn to state clearly, 'Well, we do expect to see creativity within planning'. Therefore, we all have a contribution to make in order to see these improvements.

[88] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Diolch yn fawr.

Rhodri Glyn Thomas: Thank you.

[89] **Ann Jones:** Okay. If we move, because we've already touched on digital

competence and standards of teaching, and Simon does that, and then we'll come back to Aled's part on tackling the link between deprivation and attainment. So, Simon.

[90] **Simon Thomas:** Diolch, Gadeirydd. Awn ni yn ôl at y cymhwysedd digidol yma, achos roedd hyn yn rhan o'r adroddiad lle rydych chi'n adnabod gwendidau eithaf sylfaenol, a dweud y gwir, o ystyried y pwyslais y bu sôn amdano o ran y cwricwlwm newydd a Donaldson, lle mae'n symud o fod yn rhywbeth ychwanegol i fod yn rhywbeth hollol wreiddiol sy'n eistedd ochr yn ochr â rhifedd a llythrennedd. Yn arbennig, rydych chi'n dweud ei bod wedi'i gydlynu yn wael iawn. Rwy'n cymryd bod hynny'n golygu bod yna ddiffyg cysondeb ar draws y sectorau ynglŷn â'r ffordd y mae mynd i'r afael â hwn. Beth yw'ch ystyriaeth chi nawr o'r sefyllfa hon fel ag y mae, wrth baratoi am y cwricwlwm newydd? A ydych chi'n gallu adnabod rhai pethau sy'n digwydd y gellid adeiladu arnyn nhw i sicrhau ffyniant yn y maes yma?

Simon Thomas: Thank you, Chair. We'll just go back then to the digital competency, because that was a part of the report where you acknowledged that there are quite fundamental weaknesses given the emphasis put on this within the new curriculum and Donaldson, where it moves from being something that's additional to being something that's quite central and which sits alongside literacy and numeracy. In particular, you say that it has been badly co-ordinated. I take it that that means that there is a lack of consistency across the sectors in the way that this is addressed. What are your considerations now of the situation as it is in preparation for the new curriculum? Can you recognise some things that are happening and that could be built upon to ensure that there is success in this area?

[91] **Mr Rowlands:** Ie. Unwaith eto, rwy'n credu y bydd Simon yn medru helpu fan hyn achos mae Simon ar rai o'r gweithgorau yma. Mae'r math o batrwm sydd wedi'i sefydlu ar gyfer llythrennedd a rhifedd yn argoeli y dylem ni wneud rhywbeth tebyg mewn—

Mr Rowlands: Yes. Once again, I think Simon will be able to assist us here because Simon is on some of these working groups. The kind of pattern put in place for literacy and numeracy does suggest that we should do something similar—

[92] **Simon Thomas:** Felly, fframwaith cenedlaethol er

Simon Thomas: So, a national framework, for example.

enghraifft.

[93] **Mr Rowlands:** Ie, ac, wrth **Mr Rowlands:** Yes, indeed, and that is gwrs, dyna beth yw'r bwriad. Mae the intention. That certainly is an hynny'n help i alluogi ysgolion i assistance in helping schools to plan gynllunio rhywbeth ar draws y in a cross-curricular way. But, as I cwricwlwm. Ond, fel roeddwn i'n sôn mentioned earlier, the development yn gynt, mae anghenion datblygu needs of staff are even greater in this staff yn hyd yn oed mwy dwys yn y area than they are in the other two maes yma nag yn y ddau faes arall. that you mentioned.

[94] I don't know if Simon wants to add anything.

[95] **Mr Brown:** I think there's three points, really. The first one is that the digital competency is moving towards the same sort of approach as the literacy and numeracy framework because it gives that sort of structure that teachers are familiar with. And, as Meilyr said, teachers feel confident in literacy. They're getting more confidence in numeracy. Therefore, having the digital competency framework along the same lines will also build on that existing confidence. So, that's one aspect.

[96] I think the second aspect is that there is an issue about how teachers are trained in terms of digital competency going forward. There are two aspects to that training. The one is how you take the skills that qualified ICT people have got and how you spread those skills to other members of staff in other subjects, particularly in secondary schools.

[97] The third one is how you get leadership teams to appreciate that ICT is one area where you can innovate and be creative and you can drift away from the lesson plan. For example, when Meilyr was talking, as an ex-geography teacher, I was immediately thinking that this week is a classic example where you can turn a geography lesson into something to do about rivers and measuring volume of water in rivers and riverbanks and that sort of thing, which immediately means you're bringing in numeracy, because you've got to do cross-sections of volumes. That would be a golden opportunity to bring some numeracy into geography lessons. It may not be exactly what you were going to do that week in terms of your lesson plans, but it brings immediacy for the children because you could have video clips of the news and everything. You could make it into a really exciting lesson, but you'll be doing numeracy rather than geography. But, that is predicated on the fact that, in that particular school, you'd understand, as a geography

teacher, how to get across doing cross-sections of volume, having been advised by the mathematics department so that it's done in a consistent way. Because, one of the issues you find, particularly in secondary schools, is a geography teacher saying, 'I like doing it this way', and then the children going to a maths lesson and the maths teacher saying, 'Oh, no, Mr Brown shouldn't have done it that way, that's not the way we do it'.

[98] **Simon Thomas:** I got that all the time with my children. It's all right. *[Laughter.]*

[99] **Mr Brown:** So, as you say, in our report, there is an issue we pick up at secondary schools about the quality and the amount of dialogue that goes on between English, maths and ICT, which are specialist departments, with other departments in the school. But I think, in terms of the Successful Futures work, this is something that working groups are very alive to. We know what the issues are and that's been factored into the discussions of planning that we're doing.

[100] **Simon Thomas:** Serch hynny, os yw hyn yn mynd i weithio o dan y cwricwlwm newydd—. Mae'n rhy hwyr os yw'r disgybl wedi cyrraedd ysgol uwchradd, os nad yw'r disgybl hwnnw wedi cael y cymhwysedd digidol yma yn ystyr ehangach y gair—nid jest defnyddio technoleg ond deall, er enghraifft, codio i ryw raddau. Rydw i wedi ymweld ag ysgol gynradd lle gwelais i godio yn digwydd, ac roedd e'n wych, ond roedd hon yn un o'r ysgolion arloesedd newydd yn y cwricwlwm newydd. So, da iawn, ac fe ddylai fod yn wych, achos maen nhw'n arloesi yn y cwricwlwm newydd.

Simon Thomas: Despite that, if that is going to work under the new curriculum—. It's too late if a pupil has reached secondary school, unless that pupil has this digital competency in the wider sense—not just using technology but understanding, for example, coding. I visited a primary school where I saw coding taking place, and it was excellent, but it was one of the new pioneer schools in the new curriculum. So, well done, and it should be excellent, because they're pioneering in it.

10:30

[101] Ond rwyf i hefyd yn gwybod nad yw hynny'n digwydd yn y rhan fwyaf o ysgolion cynradd—y lefel yna

But I also know that it's not happening in the majority of primary schools—teachers with that level of

o hyder gan yr athro, ond ennyn hyder yn y disgyblion hefyd. Mae jest yn fy nharo i, o ddarllen yr adroddiad ac o beth rydw i'n canfod fy hunan hefyd, ein bod ni dipyn ar ei hôl hi a dweud y gwir. Mae disgyblion yn gallu dysgu, ac mae hynny'n *fine*—byddan nhw'n gallu dal i fyny'n glou iawn—ond mae yna gohort o athrawon gennym ni, yn enwedig mewn ysgolion cynradd, sydd ddim yn barod ac sydd ddim yn hyderus i wneud hyn. Mae'r *new deal* yn adlewyrchu hynny, ond a ydych chi wedi gweld hynny nawr yn dechrau mynd ar waith yn y system?

[102] **Mr Rowlands:** Wel, fel rwy'ti'n ei ddweud, mae yna enghreifftiau o arfer da, ac yn sicr rŷm ni i gyd yn gallu enwi ysgolion ble mae yna arfer da yn y maes yma. Ond nid oes dim amheuaeth ei fod e yn gonsŷrn bod angen cymaint o hyfforddi ar athrawon yn y maes yma. Rwy'n ymwybodol bod y grŵp sydd yn edrych ar hyn yn hollol ymwybodol. Rydw i ar y *change board* ac rwy'n gwybod bod yna drafod dwys iawn ynglŷn â sut mae rhoi yr holl hyfforddiant yma i gynifer o athrawon. Felly, rwy'n meddwl bod pobl yn derbyn bod yna her yma.

[103] **Simon Thomas:** Océ, wel mae mynd i'r afael â hynny a mynd i'r afael â'r heriau eraill yn y system yn dibynnu, fel mae'r adroddiad yn nodi ac fel, i fod yn deg, mae Estyn wedi nodi ers sawl blwyddyn bellach, ar y safonau ac arweiniad addysgu sydd

confidence, but also giving the children that confidence. It just strikes me, in reading the report and from what I understand myself, that we are quite behind. Pupils can learn, and that's fine—they can catch up very quickly—but there is a cohort of teachers, particularly in primary schools, that aren't ready and aren't confident in this. The new deal reflects that, but have you seen that now starting to work in the system?

Mr Rowlands: Well, as you say, there are examples of good practice, and certainly we could all name schools where good practice exists in this area. But there is no doubt that it's a worry that so much training is required by teachers in this area. I am aware that the group looking at this are very aware of the issues. I'm on the change board and I do know that there has been a great deal of discussion in terms of how we can provide all of this training to that cohort of teachers. So, I do think people do understand and accept that there is a challenge here.

Simon Thomas: Addressing that and also addressing the other challenges in the system does depend, as the report says and, to be fair, as Estyn has identified for quite a few years now, on the standards and the leadership in the teaching that we

gennym ni yn yr ysgolion hynny. Rŷch chi eisoes wedi sôn am y pegynu sydd yn dechrau amlygu ei hunan: bod gyda ni nifer fwy, efallai, o athrawon o ysgolion rhagorol, ond mae yna rai yn dechrau cwmpo ar ei hôl hefyd.

[104] Rŷm ni hefyd wedi trafod yr amrywiaeth y tu fewn i ysgolion wrth gymharu amrywiaeth rhwng yr ysgolion. Roeddwn i jest eisiau mynd yn ôl at hynny i holi un cwestiwn penodol ar ddysgu ar hyn o bryd, achos mae'r pwyllgor yma newydd gwblhau adroddiad ar ddysgu cyflenwi, ac athrawon cyflenwi, ac un o ofidiau'r pwyllgor yma bryd hynny oedd nad oedd yna gysondeb datblygu proffesiynol ar gyfer y garfan yna o athrawon ymysg athrawon eraill. Roeddwn i jest eisiau gofyn a oes gyda chi unrhyw dystiolaeth fod yr amrywiaeth mewn safonau addysgu y tu fewn i ysgolion o gwbl yn adlewyrchu'r defnydd, neu sut y defnyddir, athrawon cyflenwi gan ysgolion, gan fod tua 10 y cant o wersi yn cael eu darparu gan athrawon cyflenwi?

[105] **Mr Rowlands:** Na, nid ydw i'n meddwl bod gyda ni y dystiolaeth yna. Fel rŷch chi'n gwybod, rŷm ni wedi bod yn y pwyllgor yma o'r blaen yn siarad am athrawon cyflenwi. Nid ydw i'n meddwl bod gennym ni lawer i'w ychwanegu at beth rŷm ni wedi'i ddweud o'r blaen. Mae rhai ysgolion yn tueddu i gael mwy o athrawon cyflenwi nag eraill. Weithiau, y rheini

have in those schools. You have already mentioned the polarisation that is starting to become apparent: that there's a greater number, perhaps, of teachers in excellent schools, but some are starting to fall behind as well.

We've also discussed the variation that exists within a school in comparing variations between schools. I just wanted to go back to that to ask one specific question on teaching at the moment, because this committee has just completed a report on supply teaching and supply teachers, and one of this committee's concerns was that there was no consistency in CPD in terms of that group of teachers. I just wanted to ask whether you had any evidence at all that the variation in standards of teaching within schools reflected at all the use of supply teachers, or how they are used, by schools, because about 10 per cent of lessons are provided by supply teachers?

Mr Rowlands: No, I don't think we do have that evidence. As you know, we've appeared before this committee in the past discussing supply teaching and I don't think that we would have much to add to what we've said on the issue in the past. There are some schools that do tend to have more supply teachers than others. On occasion, those are the

yw'r ysgolion sy'n cael y trafferthion mwyaf. Y rheswm yw oherwydd bod yr ysgol yn cael trafferthion—efallai bod fwy o salwch a dyna pam mae yna fwy o athrawon cyflenwi, nid y ffordd arall o gwmpas.

[106] **Simon Thomas:** Mae'n gylch dieflig.

[107] **Mr Rowlands:** Ie, mae'n gallu bod yn gylch dieflig. Un o'r pethau, rwy'n meddwl, sydd wedi dod allan o waith Estyn, ond sydd hefyd yn cael ei adlewyrchu yn adroddiad yr Athro Donaldson, ydy'r cyswllt rhwng y cwricwlwm, sef y profiadau dysgu, a'r addysgu. Rwy'n meddwl bod yna deimlad gan bobl, pan fyddwn ni'n beirniadu'r addysgu, ein bod ni'n beirniadu athrawon, ond nid yw e mor syml â hynny. Os nad ydych chi'n cynllunio cwricwlwm sydd yn ennyn diddordeb, mae addysgu yn anodd. Felly, mae'r ddau beth yn mynd gyda'i gilydd yn agos iawn. Dyna un o'r rhesymau rydw i'n optimistaidd ynglŷn â gwella ansawdd addysgu, sef bod pawb nawr yn dechrau sylweddoli mor agos y mae hynny wedi'i gysylltu ag ansawdd y profiadau dysgu hefyd, sef y cwricwlwm.

[108] **Simon Thomas:** A oedd rôl gyda chi, fel Estyn, o gwbl wrth ddethol a dewis yr ysgolion arloesedd ar gyfer y cwricwlwm newydd?

[109] **Mr Rowlands:** Oedd. Rwy'n

schools that are facing greatest difficulty. But the reason for that is because the school is having difficulty—perhaps there is greater teacher absence and that they do need to use supply teachers, rather than the reverse.

Simon Thomas: It's a vicious circle to a certain extent.

Mr Rowlands: Yes, it can be a vicious circle. One of the things that I think has emerged from Estyn's work and which is also reflected in Professor Donaldson's report is the link between the curriculum, namely the learning experience, and the teaching. I do think that people tend to feel that when we criticise teaching, that we are criticising teachers, but it's not that simple. Because, if you don't design a curriculum that actually engenders the interests of pupils, then teaching becomes very difficult. So, the two things go hand in hand. That's one of the reasons for my optimism in terms of improving the quality of teaching, because everyone now is starting to realise how closely linked that is with the quality of the learning experiences, and that comes down to the curriculum.

Simon Thomas: Did Estyn have a role in selecting the pioneer schools for the new curriculum?

Mr Rowlands: Yes. I think it's

credu ei bod yn bwysig nodi bod Estyn wedi cymryd rhan agos iawn yn yr holl waith sy'n deillio o adroddiad yr Athro Donaldson, a dweud y gwir. Adroddiad annibynnol, wrth gwrs, oedd hwnnw. Mi oedd yna ddau arolygydd Ei Mawrhydi wedi cael eu secondio o Estyn i'r tîm yna, ac roedd Sarah Morgan yn un ohonyn nhw, felly gallwch chi feio Sarah am bopeth. [*Chwerthin.*] Felly, mi ydym ni wedi bod yn rhan o hynny o'r cychwyn, ac rydym ni'n derbyn sylwadau yr Athro Donaldson ac yn falch bod y Llywodraeth wedi derbyn yr argymhellion i gyd. Ond, ers hynny, mi ydym ni—. I ateb dy gwestiwn di, oeddem, mi oeddem ni'n rhan o'r grŵp oedd yn edrych ar yr ysgolion arloesi.

[110] **Simon Thomas:** Diolch, a diolch am gadarnhau hynny, ac mae hynny'n galonogol o'r safbwynt hwnnw, achos mae'r ysgolion, wrth gwrs, yn arwain y ffordd fan hyn. Mae'n deg i ddweud—nid wyf yn eu nabod nhw i gyd, wrth gwrs, ond, o edrych ar y rhestr a darllen eich adroddiadau a'ch astudiaethau achos chi yn y gorffennol—fod rhai o'r ysgolion hynny'n adnabyddus gan eu bod nhw wedi brigo am resymau positif yn y gorffennol. Ond, o edrych ar yr adroddiad sydd ger ein bron yr wythnos hon, mae'n dal yn wir bod y safonau addysgu y byddech yn disgwyl eu cael, byddai'n deg dweud, rwy'n meddwl, ar gyfer y cwricwlwm newydd yma—heriau dwfn y cwricwlwm newydd yma, ond

important to note that Estyn did participate very much in all of the work emerging from Professor Donaldson's report, to be honest. That, of course, was an independent report. There were two HMI seconded from Estyn to those teams, and Sarah Morgan was one of them, so you can blame Sarah for everything. [*Laughter.*] So, we have been part of that from the very outset, and we do accept the comments of Professor Donaldson and are pleased that the Government has accepted all of the recommendations. But, since then, we have—. To answer your question, yes, we were involved in the group that looked at those pioneer schools.

Simon Thomas: Thank you, and thank you for confirming that, and that is heartening in terms of that, because the schools, of course, are leading the way here. It is fair to say—I don't know them all, of course, but, from looking at the list and reading your reports and case studies in the past—that some of those schools are well known because they have come to the fore for positive reasons in the past. But, from looking at the report that is before us this week, it is still true to say that the teaching standards that you would expect, it's fair to say, I think, for the new curriculum—the intense challenges of the new curriculum, but exciting—that the teaching standards in general in Wales are only available

cyffrous—fod y safonau addysgu yn gyffredinol gennym ni yng Nghymru ond ar gael mewn tua hanner o'r ysgolion uwchradd yr ydych yn sôn amdany'n nhw fan hyn. Ym mha ffordd y gallwn ni gymryd y naid cwantwm yna, o sefyllfa lle mae yna ffordd ganolig yn cael ei derbyn gan gynifer o arweinwyr addysg—ac nid wyf jest yn sôn am brifathrawon; rwy'n sôn am ein hawdurdodau addysg ac, o bosibl, consortia fan hyn—i sefyllfa lle mae yna lawer mwy o allu yn y system i ddelio â her y cwricwlwm newydd?

[111] **Mr Rowlands:** Byddwn i bron yn ei roi'r ffordd arall o gwmpas: y cwricwlwm newydd yw yr ateb ar gyfer yr addysgu sydd ddim yn ddigon da.

[112] **Simon Thomas:** Océ, mae hwnnw'n ateb digon teg. Ond, i ryw sinig fel fi, felly, ble wyf i'n canfod y wybodaeth—nid bod y cwricwlwm newydd ddim yn gallu gwneud rhan o hynny; rwy'n derbyn y pwynt yr ydych chi'n ei wneud—fod gan y proffesiwn y sgiliau, neu a fydd gan y proffesiwn y sgiliau, gyda datblygu proffesiynol, i bontio rhwng yr hyn a fydd ar gael ac yn fwy deniadol, gobeithio, yn y cwricwlwm newydd, a chyflwyno hynny yn y ffordd fwyaf proffesiynol? Mae'n amlwg ei fod yn gallu digwydd, achos rydym yn gweld yr ysgolion arloesi yma, a rhai eraill hefyd, lle mae'r lefel yna o sgiliau i'w gael. Ond, nid yw'r adroddiad blynyddol, i mi, yn awgrymu bod y lefel o sgiliau

in about half of the secondary schools you mention here. In what way can we take that quantum leap, from a situation where there is a median way being accepted by so many education leaders—and I'm not just talking about headteachers; I'm talking about local authorities and, possibly, consortia here—to a situation where there is much more ability to deal with the challenges of the new curriculum?

Mr Rowlands: I would almost turn it on its head: it's the new curriculum that's the solution for teaching that isn't of a sufficiently high standard.

Simon Thomas: Okay, that is quite a fair answer. But, for a cynic like myself, where do I find the information—not that the new curriculum can't do part of that; I accept the point you're making—that the profession has the skills, or will have the skills, with CPD, to bridge between what will be available and more attractive, hopefully, in the new curriculum, and presenting that in the most professional way? It's clear that it can happen, because we are seeing these pioneer schools, and others, where that level of skills is available. But, the annual report, to me, doesn't suggest that that level of skills is available on every level in every school, and there is still a

yna i'w gael ar bob lefel ym mhob ysgol, ac mae broblem arweinyddiaeth yn dal gyda ni yng Nghymru, onid oes? problem with leadership in Wales, isn't there?

[113] **Mr Rowlands:** Oes, rwy't ti'n iawn—dyna beth mae'r adroddiad yn ei ddweud, ac mae'r heriau yna a'r problemau yna gyda ni. Yr unig beth buaswn i'n ychwanegu at beth rwyf wedi ei ddweud yn barod yw bod yna gryn dipyn o gonsensws a hyder ynglŷn â'r cyfeiriad yma. Hynny ydy, nid jest yr ysgolion arloesi sydd yn teimlo'n frwdfrydig ynglŷn â'r datblygiadau yma. Mae'r ysgolion efallai sydd ddim cystal yn edrych ymlaen at y broses yma. Felly, byddwn i'n cymryd hyder o'r ymdeimlad yna, sydd yn eithaf cyffredinol, rwy'n teimlo, tu ôl i Donaldson. **Mr Rowlands:** Yes, you're right—that's what the report says, and those challenges and those problems persist. The only thing that I would add to what I've already said is that there is a fair bit of consensus and confidence in terms of this direction of travel. That's to say, it's not only the pioneer schools that feel enthused about these developments. I think the schools that perhaps aren't performing as well are looking forward to this process. So, I would take confidence from that feeling, which, I think, seems to be spread generally behind Donaldson.

[114] **Ms Morgan:** One of the most interesting things we saw when I was working with Professor Donaldson was that we tried to take him to schools that were doing very well, and that were very successful. We also took him to schools that had been in special measures and significant improvement. And the response towards the sort of things he was suggesting was almost unanimous, actually—almost everybody we spoke to was very excited by it. And, although they accepted that there was a challenge there to be had, and that, yes, teachers did need to up their skill level and so on, even in some schools that had had some very significant difficulties, there was a lot of excitement about it, and there was a belief that they could do it, given the right support and the right training, and I think, importantly, the ability to collaborate with other schools and to work closely with them—and I think those pioneer schools are going to be crucial in gathering others into the fold gently and gradually, and I think that's something exciting to look forward to.

[115] **Simon Thomas:** Y cwestiwn olaf, felly, ar hyn, sy'n deillio o **Simon Thomas:** The final question on this, then, which stems from that, is

hynny, yw'r ffaith bod Donaldson a'r fargen newydd hefyd llaw yn llaw yn dibynnu lawer ar hunanarfarnu. Rŷm ni wedi crybwyll hyn eisoes, ond rwyf jest eisiau gofyn ymhellach: a ydych chi o'r farn bod y dulliau hunanarfarnu yn ddigon cadarn yn y system? Achos mae yna sawl cyfeiriad yn yr adroddiad, a dweud y gwir, at achosion lle mae hynny wedi cwmpo i lawr.

[116] **Mr Rowlands:** Wel, rydych chi'n gwybod beth yw barn Estyn: mae hunanarfarnu yn bwysig ofnadwy. Yn aml, yr ysgolion yna sy'n gwneud yn dda yw'r ysgolion sy'n hunanarfarnu mewn ffordd hollol onest. Maen nhw'n adnabod, hyd yn oed pan fo rhywbeth yn dda, nid da lle gellir gwell. Hefyd, mae'r ysgolion yna sydd ddim yn gwneud yn dda yn aml iawn yw'r rhai sydd yn meddwl eu bod yn well nag ydyn nhw. Felly, rydym ni'n pwysleisio drwy'r amser ar bwysigrwydd hunanasesu fel rhywbeth mae pob ysgol yn ei wneud, bob blwyddyn.

[117] Felly, rŷm ni'n falch iawn ein bod ni wedi cael newid yn y rheoliadau arolygu, sy'n galluogi Estyn i fynd i mewn i ysgol ar unrhyw adeg yn y cylch, achos, o'r blaen, roedd yn rhaid inni fynd pob chwe blynedd, neu bob saith mlynedd. Felly, mae'n bwysig ein bod ni'n gallu gwneud hynny. Y llynedd oedd y flwyddyn gyntaf inni wneud hynny, ac roedd yn ddiddorol i weld beth oedd canlyniadau hynny. Y canlyniadau

the fact that Donaldson and the new deal side by side rely a lot on self-evaluation. We've mentioned this already, but I just wanted to ask further: are you of the view that the self-evaluation methods are robust enough in the system? Because there are a number of references in the report to cases where that has fallen down.

Mr Rowlands: Well, you know what Estyn's view is: self-evaluation is exceptionally important. Very often, those schools that perform well are the schools that self-evaluate in a very honest way. They identify, even when things are good, that there is room for improvement. Also, those schools that don't perform as well are very often those schools that believe that they're better than they actually are. So, we are constantly emphasising the importance of self-evaluation and self-assessment as something that every school does on an annual basis.

So, we're very pleased that we've seen a change in the inspection regulations, which enables Estyn to go into a school at any time within the cycle, because in the past we'd have to go in every six or seven years. Therefore, it's important that we can do that. Last year was the first year in which we did it, and it was interesting to see the outcomes of that. They were that the majority of schools were carrying out that work

hynny oedd bod mwyafrif yr ysgolion yn gwneud y gwaith yna bob blwyddyn, a ni chawson nhw eu dal allan. Ond roedd yn siomedig bod yna nifer bychan o ysgolion nad oedd yn gwneud y gwaith hunanarfarnu, hunanasesu, yna, a'r cynllunio wedyn, sydd yn gorfod—fedrwch chi ddim yn cynllunio oni bai eich bod chi'n gwybod ble yr ydych chi. Felly, nid yw'r gwaith cynllunio wedyn yn waith cynllunio go iawn. Ond roedd yna nifer bychan o ysgolion, achos ein bod ni wedi dod mewn ar amser nad oedden nhw'n ei disgwyl, lle roedd yn amlwg nad oedden nhw wedi gwneud y gwaith yna. Felly, rwy'n meddwl bod y system arolygu yn hynny o beth yn mynd i helpu ysgolion i wneud yn siŵr eu bod nhw'n hunanasesu'n iawn.

on an annual basis, and they weren't caught out. But it was disappointing that there was a small number of schools that weren't carrying out that self-evaluation and self-assessment work, and the planning that has to emerge from that—you can't plan unless you know where you're starting point is. Therefore, that planning work isn't effective unless you've done that evaluation. But there was a small number of schools, because we'd come in when they weren't expecting us, where it was clear that they hadn't carried out that work. So, I think that the inspection system in that regard is going to assist schools in ensuring that they do self-assess and self-evaluate effectively.

[118] **Ann Jones:** Okay. Thanks. Aled on the link between deprivation—

[119] **Aled Roberts:** Cwestiwn sydyn ar y fframwaith cymhwysedd digidol yma, wrth inni sôn hefyd am y fframwaith llythrennedd a rhifedd. Rydych chi'n ymwybodol, mae'n debyg, o'r feirniadaeth ymysg y proffesiwn ynglŷn â'r ffordd y cafodd y fframwaith llythrennedd a rhifedd ei gyflwyno, ansawdd yr adnoddau oedd ar gael, a hefyd y ffaith bod yna gwestiynau ynglŷn â'r cwmni penodol a gafodd ei benodi gan Lywodraeth Cymru. A oes yna wersi felly, wrth inni edrych ar y fframwaith cymhwysedd digidol, ac, wrth gwrs, yr holl newidiadau yn Donaldson—a oes angen i Lywodraeth Cymru

Aled Roberts: A quick question on this digital competence framework, as we're also talking about the literacy and numeracy framework. You're no doubt aware of the criticism within the profession about the way the LNF was presented, the quality of the resources that were available, and also the fact that there were questions over the specific company appointed by Welsh Government. Are there lessons, therefore, as we look at the digital competence framework, and, of course, at all the changes in Donaldson—is there a need for the Welsh Government to learn lessons

ddysgu gwersi o'r ffordd y cafodd y fframwaith llythrennedd a rhifedd ei gyflwyno i ysgolion yn y lle cyntaf? from the way that the LNF was introduced to schools in the first place?

[120] **Mr Rowlands:** Oes, rwy'n meddwl bod yna wersi. Mae adroddiadau Estyn wedi nodi nifer o'r un pwyntiau a ydych chi'n eu dweud. Rwy'n meddwl bod yna farn gyffredinol ynglŷn â beth oedd gwendidau'r ffordd y cafodd y fframweithiau yna eu cyflwyno. Efallai bod Simon yn gwybod rhywbeth yn benodol ynglŷn â beth yw'r cynlluniau am ddefnyddio'r fframwaith newydd digidol, ond ni fuaswn yn meddwl na fydd y gwersi yna yn cael eu dysgu. Rwy'n meddwl y bydd yna ffyrdd gwahanol yn cael eu defnyddio, buaswn i'n meddwl.

Mr Rowlands: Yes, I think there are lessons to be learnt. Estyn reports have noted a number of the points that you've just mentioned. I think there is a general view on the problems in terms of the way in which those frameworks were introduced. Perhaps Simon could provide some specifics as to what the plans for the new digital competence framework are, but I wouldn't have thought that those lessons wouldn't be learnt. I think there will be different methods adopted, or I would assume so.

[121] I don't know, Simon, if there's anything else.

[122] **Mr Brown:** Yes, on the way in which the digital competencies are going to be communicated, I think there are lessons learnt from what happened with the literacy and numeracy, which have been taken on board. I think your issue about resources is an interesting one, because the digital competency roll-out we predicated very much on the use of Hwb and Hwb+, and the materials on Hwb and Hwb+ will be generated by other schools, by the digital pioneer schools, for example, and by other schools that have got particular strengths in digital work. So, that's almost a cost-neutral resource that's being put in, and also the working group is being very careful to make sure that the products aren't, if you like, commercialised products. They're products that are available at minimal cost. Even some of the programmes that are used for programming and control technology that Simon referred to, those are available at minimal cost. So, last week, at a meeting that I was in, we were talking about the potential resource implications for schools, and they're considered to be pretty minimal. All schools in Wales now are connected to the internet. Hwb is rolling out at a rapid rate to all teachers and all schools. There's a very big push by Welsh Government on the use of Hwb and Hwb+ and I think, as teachers realise that there will be a build-up

and an accumulation of a wealth of materials on there, it'll be the go-to place to get your curriculum materials and your exemplification materials.

10:45

[123] **Aled Roberts:** Well i ni symud at amddifadedd a chyrhaeddiad cyn i'r Cadeirydd ddechrau colli ei hamynedd. Rwyf eisiau edrych ar y ffaith eich bod yn dweud bod yna leihad sylweddol wedi bod, mae'n debyg, yn y bwlch cyrhaeddiad o ran y plant hynny sy'n derbyn prydiau ysgol am ddim o'i gymharu â'u cyfoedion nhw. A yw hynny'n adlewyrchiad o welliannau yn y ffordd y mae'r ysgolion unigol yn cefnogi'r plant hyn neu a oes yna unrhyw neges arall yn dod allan o'ch arolygon chi?

Aled Roberts: We'd better move on to deprivation and attainment before the Chair starts to become impatient. I want to look at the fact that you say that there has been a substantial reduction, apparently, in the attainment gap for those children who receive free school meals as compared with their peers. Is that a reflection of improvements in the way individual schools are supporting these children or is there any other message coming out of your inspections?

[124] **Mr Rowlands:** Na. Rwyf yn meddwl nad oes amheuaeth bod gwelliant oherwydd beth y mae'r ysgolion hynny wedi ei wneud. Mae'n anodd meddwl beth arall gall fod y rheswm am hynny. Mae'n fwy anodd dweud ai oherwydd y grant amddifadedd yw e, achos mae hwnnw jest yn rhan o beth y mae ysgolion yn ei wneud. Ond, yn sicr, rwy'n meddwl bod y sylw sydd wedi cael ei rhoi i amddifadedd dros nifer o flynyddoedd yn dechrau cael effaith nawr mewn ysgolion.

Mr Rowlands: No. I don't think that there's any doubt that the improvement's taken place because of the action taken by schools. It is difficult to imagine what other reason there could be for that. It's more difficult to identify whether it is all down to the pupil deprivation grant, because that is only part of what the schools are doing. But, certainly, I think that the light that has been shone on deprivation over a number of years is starting to have an impact within schools.

[125] **Aled Roberts:** Mae'r grant yn eithaf sylweddol a bydd yn cynyddu eto eleni. Os ydych yn dweud ei bod hi'n anodd dweud os yw'r grant ei hun yn gyrru'r gwelliant yma, a oes

Aled Roberts: The grant is quite substantial and will increase again this year. If you are saying that it is difficult to say whether it's the grant itself that drives this improvement,

yna yn dal i fod pryderon o ran y ffordd y mae'r ysgolion yn gwneud defnydd o'r grant? Mi oedd adroddiad y llynedd yn dweud nad oedd nifer o ysgolion yn ymwybodol o'r canllawiau gan y Llywodraeth, ac nad oeddent yn ymwybodol o'r negeseuon yn y Sutton Trust *toolkit* a phethau felly. A yw hynny'n gwella o achos yr holl sylw sydd wedi cael ei rhoi iddo, neu a oes yn dal gennyh chi bryderon ynglŷn â'r sefyllfa?

[126] **Mr Rowlands:** Rwy'n meddwl bod y sefyllfa'n gwella. Mae'r ffordd, er enghraifft, y mae'r ysgolion yn defnyddio'r grant i gefnogi plant ar draws yr ystod gallu, er enghraifft—rwy'n meddwl bod hynny'n gwella a bod y plant mwy abl sydd yn dod o gefndir tlawd yn cael cefnogaeth, ac efallai nad oedd hynny'n wir yn y gorffennol. Mae yna arwyddion bod ysgolion yn defnyddio'r grant mewn ffordd well, ond mae yna ysgolion—lleiafrif o ysgolion, ond mae yna ysgolion—nad ydynt, efallai, yn dal i ddefnyddio'r grant yn y ffordd orau. Ac, yn fwy cyffredin, nid yw ysgolion o bosib yn arfarnu defnydd y grant yn ddigon manwl. Felly, mae'n anodd i ni wedyn arfarnu effeithiolrwydd y grant oherwydd nad yw'r ysgolion eu hunain wedi cadw'r data ac wedi gwneud yr hunanarfarnu angenrheidiol. Felly, mae hwnnw'n faes y mae angen ei wella.

are there still concerns in terms of the way schools are making use of the grant? Last year's report said that a number of schools weren't aware of the Government guidelines, and that they weren't aware of the messages from the Sutton Trust toolkit and so forth. Is that improving because of all the attention that's been given to this area, or are you still concerned about the situation?

Mr Rowlands: I think that the situation is improving. The way in which schools use the grant to support children across the ability range, for example—I think that's improving and that more able pupils from deprived backgrounds are receiving support, and perhaps that was not the case in the past. There are signs that schools are using the pupil deprivation grant in a more effective way, but there are schools—a minority of schools, but there are schools—that are still perhaps not using the grant in the most effective way. And, more generally, schools aren't perhaps evaluating the use of the grant in enough detail. Therefore, it's difficult for us to come to a decision as to the effectiveness of the grant because the schools themselves haven't kept the data and haven't carried out the necessary self-evaluation. Therefore, that's an area where improvements are needed.

[127] **Aled Roberts:** Yr wythnos

Aled Roberts: Last week, we were

diwethaf, roeddem yn craffu ar gyllideb yr adran addysg ac yn trafod y ffaith fod yna nifer fawr o grantiau penodol wedi diflannu ac, o achos hynny, hwyrach, bod yna bryderon bod y sylw ar gyfer plant o grwpiau arbennig hwyrach yn mynd ar goll. Rwy'n meddwl mai un o'r ystadegau a oedd yn creu pryder i mi oedd yr un yn ymwneud â phlant Teithwyr a'r Roma, lle—hyd yn oed os ydym yn edrych ar y cynnydd sydd wedi bod o ran cyrhaeddiad plant sydd yn derbyn prydiau ysgol am ddim—mae'r ffigwr o ran rhai o'r grwpiau arbennig yma yn dangos nad oes cynnydd o gwbl. A oes gennych bryderon ynghylch y ffaith fod llawer iawn o'r grantiau yma, o achos y cytundeb rhwng Cymdeithas Llywodraeth Leol Cymru a'r Llywodraeth erbyn hyn, wedi cael ei gyplysu mewn grantiau enfawr a'i bod hi'n anodd iawn, hwyrach, inni graffu ar y ffordd y mae'r gefnogaeth yn cael ei rhoi i'r grwpiau arbennig yma?

[128] **Mr Rowlands:** Mae yna fanteision ac anfanteision o roi grantiau at ei gilydd, wrth gwrs, ac rydych chi wedi dweud beth yw'r anfantais, sef bod rhyw grŵp penodol efallai nad yw'n cael y sylw. Mae'n anodd gwybod. Byddwn i'n meddwl, ar y cyfan, ei bod yn well rhoi'r grantiau at ei gilydd—mae yna lai o fiwrocratiaeth ynghlwm wrth hynny; mae'n rhoi mwy o ryddid i ysgolion ac i brifathrawon i benderfynu sut maen nhw'n mynd i wario'r arian. Ond mae eisiau wedyn wneud yn siŵr

scrutinising the education department's budget and discussed the fact that a number of specific grants had disappeared and that, as a result, perhaps, there were concerns that the emphasis on children from particular groups was being lost. I think that one of the statistics that caused me some concern was that relating to Traveller and Roma children, where—even if we look at the progress that has been made in terms of the attainment of children who receive free school meals—the figure for some of these particular groups shows no improvement at all. Do you have concerns relating to the fact that some of these grants, because of the agreement between the Welsh local Government Association and the Government now, have been merged into large grants and that it's very difficult, now, to scrutinise the way in which the support is being provided to these particular groups?

Mr Rowlands: There are benefits and disbenefits of combining grants, of course, and you've identified one of the disadvantages, namely that the one specific group perhaps isn't being given the attention. It's difficult to know. I would think that, generally speaking, it is more effective to combine these grants—there is less bureaucracy involved in doing that; it provides greater freedom for schools and for headteachers to decide how they're going to spend that money. But we then need to ensure that we

ein bod ni yn dilyn yr ysgol a bod cyrff y tu allan i'r ysgol yn craffu ar yr ysgol i wneud yn siŵr nad yw grwpiau yn cael eu hanfantasio.

[129] **Aled Roberts:** A oes gennych chi unrhyw sylw ar y ffaith bod grant amddifadedd blynyddoedd cynnar rŵan wedi cael ei gyflwyno—rhyw £300? Wrth gwrs, mae dosbarthiadau derbyn yn Lloegr yn derbyn y *pupil premium*, er nad yw ysgolion uwchradd yn Lloegr, wrth gwrs, yn derbyn grant amddifadedd i'r graddau. A ydych chi'n meddwl bod yna angen i ni, neu'r Llywodraeth, edrych ar y ffaith bod ymyrraeth gynnar o ran strategaethau yn, dywedwch, y dosbarth derbyn, hwyrach, yn mynd i fod yn fwy buddiol yn y tymor hir, neu a ydych chi'n meddwl bod y polisi ar hyn o bryd yng Nghymru hwyrach yn fwy cyflawn?

[130] **Mr Rowlands:** Wel, mae'n rhaid cyfaddef nad ydym ni wedi edrych efallai'n ddigon manwl ar hyn. Mae'n grant gymharol newydd. Wedyn, yn y llefydd nas cynhelir, mae'r plant yno am ran o'r amser hefyd. Felly, byddech chi'n disgwyl, o bosib, i'r grant fod yn llai. Yn sicr, mae ymyrraeth gynnar yn bwysig, ac rwy'n meddwl bod hwn jest yn rhywbeth y bydd rhaid inni edrych arno fe'n fanwl. Ond, yn gyffredinol, wrth gwrs, mae'n beth da bod yna grant amddifadedd yn mynd i'r lleoliadau nas cynhelir.

follow the school and that organisations outwith the school scrutinise the school to ensure that particular groups aren't disadvantaged.

Aled Roberts: Do you have any comment on the fact that the pupil deprivation grant for early years has been introduced—about £300? Of course, reception classes in England receive the pupil premium, although secondary schools in England, of course, don't receive deprivation grant to the same extent. Do you think there's a need for us, or the Government, to look at the fact that early intervention in terms of strategies in, say, reception classes is going to be beneficial in the long term, or do you think that the current policy in Wales is perhaps more effective?

Mr Rowlands: Well, I would have to admit that perhaps we haven't looked at this in sufficient detail. It is a relatively new grant. Then, with regard to non-maintained locations, the children are there for only some of the time. So, you expect the grant, possibly, to be a little lower. Certainly, early intervention is extremely important, and I do think that this is something that we will have to look at in detail, but, generally speaking, it is positive that a deprivation grant is provided to those non-maintained schools.

[131] Dylwn i fod wedi dweud yn gynt, wrth gwrs, fy mod yn cytuno'n llwyr â chi mai'r grwpiau teithio a'r Roma yw'r grŵp o gefndir ethnig sydd yn tangyflawni fwyaf, ac yn sicr, mae'n bwysig bod ysgolion yn ymwybodol o hynny. Mae gyda nhw resymau diwylliannol lle maen nhw'n ei gweld yn anodd mynd i'r ysgol—y math yna o beth—ond, yn sicr, mae'r grŵp yna angen sylw.

I should have said earlier, of course, that I agree entirely with you that Traveller groups and Roma are the ethnic minority groups that are underachieving most, and, certainly, it is very important that schools should be aware of that. They have cultural reasons for why they perhaps find difficulty with attending school—that type of thing—but, certainly, that particular cohort does need some attention.

[132] **Aled Roberts:** A ydych chi wedi gweld dirywiad yng nghyrhaeddiad y grŵp yna ers i'r grant arbenigol ddiffannu? Pan oeddwn i yn Wrecsam, mi oedd yna gryn lwyddiant i daclo rhai o'r—wel, y ffordd roedden nhw'n edrych ar addysg, i ryw raddau, neu'r ffordd roedd eu rhieni nhw'n edrych ar addysg, a lle'r oedd lefelau cyrhaeddiad wedi gwella'n arw, ond nid wyf yn ymwybodol a ydym ni wedi syrthio yn ôl ers i'r sefyllfa newid.

Aled Roberts: Have you seen a decline in the attainment of that group since this particular grant disappeared? When I was at Wrexham, there was considerable success in tackling some of the—well, the way they were looking at education, to some extent, and the way their parents looked at education, and where attainment levels had improved significantly, but I'm not aware of whether we have fallen back since the situation changed.

[133] **Mr Rowlands:** Nid wyf i'n credu bod ystadegau'n dangos eu bod nhw wedi syrthio yn ôl. Beth sydd wedi digwydd, rwy'n meddwl, ydy bod lleiafrifoedd ethnig eraill yn gwneud yn gymharol dda ac wedi gwella yn gyffredinol.

Mr Rowlands: I don't think that the statistics would show that they've fallen behind. What has happened, I think, is that other ethnic minorities are performing relatively well and have made some improvement, generally speaking.

[134] **Aled Roberts:** Iawn. Diolch.

Aled Roberts: Right. Thank you.

[135] **Ann Jones:** Okay. Shall we move on, then—because you've touched on early years—to early years? Suzy, you've got—

[136] **Suzy Davies:** Yes, just a couple of general questions about the foundation phase, really. You mentioned in the report that there's a slight decline in standards, but, bearing in mind what you said earlier, I presume you're not considering that to be significant. Is there any sort of explanation as to the difference between schools and settings more generally, which I presume are the *ysgolion meithrin*—settings like that and pre-school playgroups? Why are they that little bit better?

[137] **Mr Rowlands:** Yes. I'll ask Sarah to answer this question, but, in a general sense, you're not comparing like with like between the non-maintained settings and schools. Non-maintained settings have children who are much younger and are there for less time, and schools have older children who tend to be there for most of the time. So, it's difficult to compare our outcomes between the two sectors.

[138] **Suzy Davies:** I raise the point really because the non-school settings tend to have far more serious financial constraints placed on them. An *ysgol feithrin*, for example, will be paid for the 10 hours' education. I think it's only about three quarters of an hour prep time, which is not an awful lot of time in order to get a good standard of education, let alone care, in there. So, it's just pleasing to see that they're doing so well, considering the limitations on them.

[139] **Mr Rowlands:** That is in the context of our expectations as an inspectorate—increasing all the time, and it will increase again when we roll out the joint work we're doing with Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales. I think those inspections are even more rigorous than the current ones. But the sector is responding very positively, and engaging with us and CSSIW in that process. So, I think they're very keen to improve, and I think they appreciate the greater attention that inspection actually gives you.

[140] **Suzy Davies:** I've got just one very short specific question on this. In non-Welsh-medium settings, are you starting to see, shall we say a culture change, or at least a better understanding of why more Welsh language should be heard in these early years? Are you seeing more of it being used, albeit casually?

[141] **Ms Morgan:** We certainly see some very good examples, actually, of Welsh being used in non-Welsh-medium settings. I think particularly because the practitioners that work in those settings have had support from

the advisory teachers from the local authorities. They've often had other support as well. Actually, they're very enthusiastic about it, in a way that—. I've actually seen some better practice in English-medium settings, occasionally, than in Welsh-medium settings, having inspected both. It's quite surprising because often there are issues in some Welsh-medium settings in English areas where staff turnover is such that they sometimes struggle to find people with enough competence in Welsh to be able to deliver. So, often, we see both in both, if you like.

[142] **Suzy Davies:** It was just harking back to that earlier question about teachers' confidence in competences that aren't their primary competence, if you like. I was hoping that—

[143] **Ms Morgan:** It's certainly something that they get advice on from their advisory teachers and support from the local authority. And, yes, we do see it developing nicely.

[144] **Suzy Davies:** Could you call it as much as a trend, or is that overstating it?

[145] **Ms Morgan:** I think it varies from place to place. It tends to be through songs, through games, through the weather, and it tends to be in circle time, rather than when they go out into their more relaxed areas. Then sometimes, the practitioners are less confident. But certainly, we hear a lot of it.

[146] **Suzy Davies:** Okay. That's great. Thank you. Thank you, Chair.

[147] **Ann Jones:** Could I ask you to what extent is the quality of provision in the pupil referral units still a cause for concern?

[148] **Mr Rowlands:** I think we said that it is still a cause for concern. We looked at three large pupil referral units this year, and they did have quite good inspections, but they weren't necessarily representative of the sector as a whole. We still think there's a lot of work to do and, of course, there is a working group, chaired by my predecessor, working on this. So, we look forward to seeing the work coming out of that.

[149] **Ann Jones:** Okay. I knew when I asked it that I would open it now—briefly, because we are out of time.

[150] **Aled Roberts:** Rwy'n gwybod **Aled Roberts:** I know that your

bod eich rhagflaenydd chi yn predecessor chairs the working
cadeirio'r gweithgor, ond a oes group, but do you have an official
gennyh chi gynrychiolydd Estyn representative on that working
swyddogol Estyn ar y gweithgor? group?

[151] **Mr Rowlands:** Oes.

Mr Rowlands: Yes.

[152] **Aled Roberts:** A ydym yn dal i edrych am gael adroddiad ym mis a report on part 1 in March, or has
Mawrth o ran rhan 1, neu a ydyw'r there been some slippage in the
amserlen wedi syrthio rhywfaint? timetable?

[153] **Mr Rowlands:** Nid wyf yn ymwybodol bod yr amserlen wedi newid.
Mr Rowlands: I am not aware that the timetable has changed.

[154] **Aled Roberts:** Iawn.

Aled Roberts: Okay.

[155] **Ann Jones:** Okay. I know that David wants to bring in a different topic, but I just want to ask about leadership and management, if I can, first. I wondered if you could give us—I'm aware of the fact that we're running out of time—a summary of progress made under the inspection cycles since 2010, really, I suppose, on leadership and management within schools, and whether there is some good progress being made there.

[156] **Mr Rowlands:** The picture in terms of leadership and management, unsurprisingly really, analogues provision and standards. So, there is not a lot of progress in terms of good or better, but there is a certain amount of polarisation, again, with increasing numbers of excellent leadership being seen. But then the good and better hasn't changed an awful lot.

11:00

[157] **Ann Jones:** Okay. Thanks. I knew this would happen. Simon and then David; and David's question will be the last one because we are out of time. Simon—on consortia.

[158] **Simon Thomas:** Jest rhywbeth penodol iawn achos rydym yn gwybod eich bod yn mynd i edrych ar gonsortia nesaf ac mai dyma'r tro
Simon Thomas: Just something very specific because we know that you will be looking at consortia next and that this is the first time that you're

cyntaf i chi wneud hynny.

doing that.

[159] **Mr Rowlands:** Ie.

Mr Rowlands: Yes.

[160] **Simon Thomas:** Roeddwn i jest yn meddwl efallai y byddech chi'n ysgrifennu at y pwyllgor neu'n rhoi mwy o dystiolaeth, ond beth fyddech chi'n ei ddefnyddio fel y canllawiau neu'r gwaelodlin ar gyfer mesur y consortia, achos nid yw hwn—? A ydych chi'n mynd i'w hasesu nhw fel yr awdurdodau addysg, neu mewn ffordd gwbl wahanol? Beth yw eich barn chi?

Simon Thomas: I was just wondering that you might write to the committee or provide more evidence, but what would you use as the guidelines or the baseline for measuring the consortia, because this is not—? Are you going to assess them like the education authorities, or in a totally different way? What is your view?

[161] **Mr Rowlands:** Wel, mae gyda ni fframwaith ac mae'n seiliedig ar y gwaith thematig y gwnaethom ni. Felly, nid ydym wedi gwneud cylch arolygu ar gyfer y consortia o'r blaen, ond, wrth gwrs, mi wnaethom ni'r adroddiad thematig hwnnw. Wedyn, dyna'r gwaelodlin, mewn ffordd, ond gall Simon ddweud ychydig bach yn fwy wrthoch chi am hyn.

Mr Rowlands: Well, we do have a framework and it is based on the thematic work that we did. So, we haven't actually completed an inspection cycle of the consortia in the past, but we did actually produce that thematic report. Therefore, that provides the baseline, in a way. Simon can tell you a little bit more on that.

[162] **Mr Brown:** The approach we're going to use is: it's going to be an inspection of a region's local authorities and their ability to deliver a single school improvement service, working with their consortia. So, it's a partnership approach we're using, because it's a partnership between the authority and the commissioned regional consortia. We'll have a nominee from each regional consortia on there, somebody from the Wales Audit Office, and a two-week inspection. We've already sent out an online perception survey to all headteachers and governors in Wales, which we're beginning to get the results back from, and it will then be fed back to the chief executive, the leader, the lead director and the managing director. A report will come out six weeks after the inspection. Because of the election period, the first report won't be published until June. Then we'll do a formal report back to chairs of scrutiny. But we're very much looking at the impact of the regional consortia on children in their region. The reason why the WAO

are on there is because it gives us consistency on the thematic, and the auditor general has already written out to the Welsh Government telling them that he wants to continue a piece of work, after we finish inspecting, to look at the value for money of the consortia. He will be reporting to the Public Accounts Committee, I think towards Christmas. So, that's the intention. So, there's going to be quite a significant focus on the regional consortia over the next few months.

[163] **Simon Thomas:** Okay. I note that it's after the election.

[164] **Ann Jones:** Yes. [*Laughter.*] David, then, on initial teacher training.

[165] **David Rees:** Just finally, we've talked a lot about the quality of teaching standards. To be honest, when I looked at your report and looked at the inspections in relation to ITT—the last three—not one has got away with anything. In fact, the last two have been re-inspections, and that's deeply worrying in terms of the standards of people going out to do the teaching. Are you now confident that these institutions are addressing the issues, and that they will be ensuring that the quality of their provision is at least as high as they expect the quality of the provision in the schools to be?

[166] **Mr Rowlands:** Well, two of the centres have now been taken out of those measures that we imposed on them, and there was clear improvement in those two. But I agree totally that the situation is not acceptable. It's very worrying. It's not just Estyn that says that. There's been report after report. Professor Furlong has done two. I think there is general consensus that the system needs more than just tinkering. There does need to be a complete fresh view of how teacher training is delivered in Wales. Professor Furlong is chairing that group that's working on that. They're starting, in the first instance, on the standards for teachers and then going on to looking at how centres should be accredited. So, there's work going on there, but there's clearly a lot more work to be done on that.

[167] There is, I think, a need for a complete change of culture around initial teacher training, and speaking as an ex-teacher trainer myself, I think one of the core things that any new system should address is the relationship between the university and the training schools. To me, it is absolutely essential that we make sure that the quality of the mentoring that trainee teachers get in their training school is of the highest standard and that there is consistency between what they're being told in that situation, in that arena, and what's happening in the university. You've got to remember that a

secondary PGCE student will be spending 24 weeks in school compared to 12 weeks in university, so the majority of the time is in the school. So, I think when we're talking about re-envisaging initial teacher training, I think it should centre on how that relationship works.

[168] **Ann Jones:** Thanks very much. I'm not going to allow any more questions because I know what will happen, we'll be here—. Can I thank you all very much for coming in and giving us the detail behind your report? And thank you very much indeed for your report. This is probably the last time that you'll come before this committee, unless something major happens between now and early April. So, can I thank you, over the period of time, for all of your assistance in all our inquiries and for the fact that you've always been there to answer the questions as well? So, thanks very much. I'm sure that the new committee, post-election, will look forward to having you back with them as well. So, thank you very much.

[169] **Mr Rowlands:** Thank you as well; I've really enjoyed it.

[170] **Ann Jones:** Shall we break now until 11:15?

*Gohiriwyd y cyfarfod rhwng 11:06 ac 11:15.
The meeting adjourned between 11:06 and 11:15.*

Sesiwn Graffu Gyffredinol ar Waith y Gweinidog Ministerial General Scrutiny Session

[171] **Ann Jones:** Welcome back. We reconvene as the Children, Young People and Education Committee. We turn now to the remaining item on our agenda, which is general scrutiny of the Minister for Education and Skills. So, we once again welcome you here, Minister, I think probably for the last time in this session. Because of that—if you would first introduce your team for the record—I have allowed you to make a short opening statement. You know how I love opening statements, but I have allowed you to make a short opening statement. So, if you'd introduce your team and then go into your statement, that would be fine. Thank you.

[172] **The Minister for Education and Skills (Huw Lewis):** Thank you, Chair. I'm joined this morning on my left by Huw Morris, who is our director of skills, higher education and lifelong learning, on my immediate right by Steve Davies, director of schools standards and workforce, and, on my far right, Emma Williams, deputy director of the support for learners division.

[173] **Ann Jones:** Okay. And you want to make an opening statement.

[174] **Huw Lewis:** Yes. Thank you for the opportunity, Chair. I thought it would be a good point in time to summarise where we are just now as I see it in terms of educational developments in Wales. I'm very proud of the achievements of the Welsh Government over the last four or five years, and I think that we have put in place the right foundations for the new Assembly Government, which will take over before very long. We have, of course, that tripartite reform package involving the development of a new curriculum, the complete overhaul of initial teacher education and training and a new departure in terms of the new deal surrounding professional development for teachers. We've seen real improvements in education over the past five years—improved performance at GCSEs and A-levels. The number of children getting five good GCSEs, for instance, was nearly 8 per cent more last year than was the case back in 2011. The attainment gap too between the least well-off young people and their peers is now closing at every key stage of statutory education. So far as I'm aware, that is the first time that has ever occurred.

[175] We have out there working our Schools Challenge Cymru programme, an accelerated school improvement programme; our twenty-first century schools capital investment programme of £1.5 billion, the biggest since the 1960s; and we're also very proud of the fact that the numbers of young people not in education, employment or training are down to 10 per cent or just below and that we've protected Welsh students from high levels of debt throughout this period of Government.

[176] I should just finally, I think, mention the school categorisation process. Detailed results will be out tomorrow, but I think that, for the first time, we have a real-time snapshot for everyone concerned—parents, pupils, local authorities, consortia and, indeed, the Minister—of how each and every school in Wales is doing, based on a very thorough and rigorous process around categorisation. The figures will show, although these are just indicative until tomorrow, that we have, as compared to last year, more green schools in the green category and further reductions in red and amber categorised schools.

[177] Could I just finally—. I think this is the real reason I asked, Chair, for the opportunity to make an opening statement, unusually today, because this does give me an opportunity to thank this committee for their input, critical

and otherwise, over the last three or four years. I have to say that this committee does its job very well, in my opinion and in the opinion of many others. It does influence the course of policy making and it has. I can say these things more freely than I could have, perhaps, before, but it has certainly done its job in terms of keeping this particular Minister on the ball and being sharp around the concerns of the committee. The committee system within the Assembly is an unsung success of the whole institution, in my opinion. Thank you.

[178] **Ann Jones:** [*Inaudible.*—you’re going to get an easy ride. [*Laughter.*]

[179] **Huw Lewis:** I wouldn’t expect that for a moment.

[180] **Ann Jones:** But thank you for those words, and, to reciprocate, I think we’ve always felt that you’ve had that open door as well, so when you’ve come to committee, you’ve been very honest with us, which has probably made it quite easy. But, enough of that now. Let’s get on to some scrutiny. Rhodri Glyn, you’re going to do educational improvement and literacy and numeracy.

<p>[181] Rhodri Glyn Thomas: Diolch yn fawr iawn, Gadeirydd. A gaf i ofyn i chi yn gyntaf ynglŷn â’r fframwaith llythrennedd a rhifedd a gyhoeddwyd gan Lywodraeth Cymru ryw ddwy flynedd yn ôl? Mae’n ddyddiau cynnar, yn amlwg. Nid oes rhyw lawer o gyfeiriad at y fframwaith hwnnw yn adroddiad Estyn hyd yn hyn. A ydych yn teimlo bod y fframwaith hwnnw yn gwneud gwahaniaeth erbyn hyn o ran datblygu sgiliau llythrennedd a rhifedd yn ein hysgolion ni?</p>	<p>Rhodri Glyn Thomas: Thank you very much, Chair. Minister, can I ask you first of all about the literacy and numeracy framework, which was introduced by the Welsh Government some two years ago? It is at an early stage, obviously. There isn’t much reference to that framework in Estyn’s report to date. Do you think that that framework is making a real difference now in terms of developing numeracy and literacy skills in our schools?</p>
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[182] **Huw Lewis:** Yes. Well, you would expect me to say ‘yes’, but I think the evidence is mounting. Everyone is aware of the SQW interim report, which, of course—. I didn’t criticise the report, but I criticised the coverage of it, because that went back to the very early formative days of the literacy and numeracy framework back in the autumn of 2013. But, since then, of course, we’ve also had the Estyn chief inspector’s annual report for 2014–15, which did state that schools have made further improvements in terms of

embedding literacy and numeracy across the curriculum. As well as that, we've had in parallel with those developments around the national testing and the way in which that provides a feedback loop for good teaching and learning within the classroom. That is more than enough evidence, given also the feedback from professionals out there in the system. I've had teachers in all subject areas in secondary schools, for instance, comment on how they are using the literacy and numeracy framework to enhance the skills of their young people. One of the best conversations I had, actually, was with a PE teacher, who was using very imaginative ways of using numeracy, in particular, through their sports coaching. All this taken together is more than enough, I think, to ensure that the LNF will need to find its echo in the new curriculum, which is the Donaldson-style curriculum that we will develop. That ethos will remain.

[183] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Diolch yn fawr iawn. O ran diddordeb, ai fframwaith yma?
Rhodri Glyn Thomas: Thank you for that. Just as a matter of interest, is the framework unique to Wales?

[184] **Huw Lewis:** I don't know, actually. I'm not aware of it being taken from any other model elsewhere. Colleagues—

[185] **Ms Williams:** I think like lots of these things, it draws on experience and best practice from other parts of the world, but it is a made-in-Wales product that was designed with practitioner input in Wales, so it is unique, but draws upon best practice from across the globe.

[186] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Ac a weithredu yn gyson yn ysgolion Cymru neu a oes yna rhai ysgolion sy'n dilyn y fframwaith yn fwy manwl na'i gilydd?
Rhodri Glyn Thomas: And are you confident that it is being implemented consistently in Welsh schools or are there some schools that are following the framework in a more detailed manner than others?

[187] **Huw Lewis:** There is variability, and that's evident from Estyn's annual report. We will get the thoroughgoing truth from Estyn. There are some schools that are still to properly embed the LNF and that are still facing challenges around it. Those schools are becoming fewer and fewer in number. We will see from the categorisation results that come out tomorrow, actually, that, no doubt, many of the red-category schools that will appear in the lists tomorrow will have issues around the LNF. I don't doubt it, but we

know who they are. This is the difference: we know where they are and they know that they have issues to resolve.

[188] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Diolch yn fawr iawn. Gwnaethoch gyhoeddi yn ôl ym mis Hydref 2014 eich cynllun gwella, 'Cymwys am Oes'. Cyn hynny, roedd gan eich rhagflaenydd gynllun 20 pwynt. A oes yna elfennau o'r cynllun 20 pwynt yna sydd ddim wedi eu cyflawni, a sut fydd hynny yn bwydo i fewn i'r cynllun newydd?

Rhodri Glyn Thomas: Thank you very much. You announced back in October 2014 your 'Qualified for Life' improvement plan. Prior to that, your predecessor had a 20 point plan. Are there elements of that 20 point plan that weren't achieved, and how will that feed into the new plan?

[189] **Huw Lewis:** 'Qualified for Life' essentially superseded the 20 point plan, at least it did in my mind and in terms of my planning. So, the 20 point plan was a very useful tool insofar as it went, but 'Qualified for Life' in my view was a far more comprehensive look at school improvement and what was required, and it's the 'Qualified for Life' document now to which we work.

[190] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Ac, o ran cerdyn adrodd addysg Cymru, hefyd a gyhoeddwyd yn Hydref 2014, fe nodoch chi bryd hynny y byddai yna adroddiad blynyddol ar hwnnw yn digwydd. Mae yna dros flwyddyn wedi mynd. Pryd allwn ni ddisgwyl yr adroddiad hwnnw?

Rhodri Glyn Thomas: And, in terms of the Wales education report card, also announced in October 2014, you noted then that there would be an annual report on that. More than a year has passed since then. When can we expect that report?

[191] **Huw Lewis:** There will be a report card this spring—this spring, yes.

[192] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Pa ddylanwad mae adroddiadau allanol OECD a PISA wedi ei gael ar bolisi addysg Llywodraeth Cymru yn ystod y pedwerydd Cynulliad? Ac, yn benodol o ran llythrennedd a rhifedd, roeddem ni'n clywed oddi wrth Estyn yn gynharach y bore yma fod yna gynnydd, ac mae hynny i'w groesawu. Bellach, mae tua dwy rhan

Rhodri Glyn Thomas: What influence have external reports such as those by the OECD and PISA had on the Welsh Government's education policy during the fourth Assembly? And, specifically in terms of literacy and numeracy, we heard from Estyn earlier this morning that progress has been made, and that is to be welcomed. Now, around two thirds of

o dair ysgolion cynradd ac uwchradd yng Nghymru yn dda neu'n well, ond mae hynny yn gadael traean o ysgolion sy'n tanberfformio, mewn gwirionedd. A ych chi'n credu bod y strwythurau yn eu lle i sicrhau bod yna welliant sylweddol yn mynd i ddigwydd i'r traean hynny o ysgolion sy'n tanberfformio?

primary and secondary schools in Wales are good or better, but that does leave a third of schools that are underperforming, if truth be told. Are you confident that the structures are in place to ensure that there is going to be significant improvement in that third of schools that are currently underperforming?

[193] **Huw Lewis:** Okay, on the first part of your question, obviously the OECD has influenced thinking right across the educational community in Wales, and those PISA results in 2012 were the wake-up call that my predecessor described them as. And, over the last four years since then—it's important to realise that four years of hard work has been undertaken since then. That tripartite reform package has, really, been triggered by the shock to the system that the PISA results actually delivered. So, there's been a great responsiveness to the OECD, whilst always remembering that PISA does not encompass everything about a good education, but it certainly does tell us things that are very, very important, and we have responded to that.

[194] You're right to say that school improvement is a work in progress; there are still a third of schools that are in positions we would not want them to be in. But I think in many ways you've almost answered your own question there. Wales has now, to my mind, become unique in the United Kingdom in terms of the structures and mechanisms around school improvement. The Minister in England does not know at this point in time exactly how a particular school in a particular place is doing, unless that school has recently been inspected, whereas in Wales we all know, through the categorisation process, through the work of the consortia and local authorities and the expert advisers—the challenge advisers, I beg your pardon—that are working with schools, we know in real time how each and every school in Wales is actually doing. And there are mechanisms to do something about the fact that a school might be falling behind. When those categorisations come out tomorrow, those schools in the red category will trigger an immediate response—from the consortia in the first instance.

[195] We have a structure around schools that moves with them in their improvement journey, and allows everyone from the Minister on down the tools to understand what good intervention actually means, and to implement it. Nowhere else in the UK—I'm a great fan of the Scottish school

system, as you know, but not even in Scotland does the Minister or a director of education in a local authority have that kind of depth of understanding of where a school lies on its improvement journey. We're unique in that regard.

11:30

[196] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Ddiwedd y flwyddyn hon, ym mis Rhagfyr, fe fydd PISA yn cyhoeddi canlyniadau Cymru 2015. A ych chi'n hyderus wrth ddisgwyl yr adroddiad hwnnw a'r canlyniadau hynny?

[197] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** At the end of this year, in December, PISA will announce the Wales results for 2015. Are you confident in awaiting that particular report and those results?

[198] **Huw Lewis:** Well, we shall see when we shall see. I am confident there will be an uplift, although I think we will still have to regard the results in December as a point along a journey. There is no end point in terms of school improvement, really; there is always capacity for improvement. But, if the GCSE results are any signal, if the changes to curriculum are any signal, if the number of red-category schools falling again is anything to go by, what we are seeing is a system that is moving forward. I don't just mean a smattering of schools or even a majority of schools—an entire system moving forward. This must be reflected in the PISA results this December.

[199] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Diolch yn fawr.

[200] **Ann Jones:** Okay, I've got a number of people who want to—. If I take Simon and Suzy and then, Aled, I'll come to you and you can move on to your set of questions. So, Simon.

[201] **Simon Thomas:** Jest i aros gyda PISA am y foment, achos rwy'n derbyn nad yw e'n fesur o bopeth y mae addysg gyflawn yn ei olygu, ond fel y dywedodd Estyn wrthym ni bore yma, mae yn fesur o'r sgiliau uwch sy'n angenrheidiol ar gyfer economi fodern yn benodol, ac yn ffon fesur hynod ddefnyddiol i weld a yw sgiliau sy'n dysgu mewn un ran o'r cwricwlwm yn cael eu cymhwyso a'u defnyddio mewn man arall o'r

Simon Thomas: If we could remain with PISA just for a moment, because I accept that it doesn't actually assess everything that a comprehensive education can provide, but, as Estyn told us this morning, it does actually measure those higher-level skills that are crucial for a modern economy, and it is a very useful yardstick for seeing whether skills taught in one part of the curriculum are being applied and

cwricwlwm. Dyna lle mae disgyblion used in other parts of the curriculum. Cymru wedi bod yn wan yn y That is where Welsh pupils have gorffennol. Can dderbyn eich bod chi perhaps been weak in the past. am weld gwelliant erbyn mis Whilst accepting that you do hope to Rhagfyr—cawn ni weld a fydd see improvements by December— hynny'n digwydd—a ydych chi yn we'll have to wait to see if that is the gadarn bod y camau yr ydych chi case—are you confident that the wedi'u gosod yn eu lle i wella sgiliau steps that you've put in place to llythrennedd, rhifedd ar draws y improve numeracy and literacy skills cwricwlwm wedi bod yn rhai sydd yn across the curriculum have been ones ymateb i her PISA yn hytrach na rai that respond to the challenge of PISA sy'n ymateb i her fwy plwyfol, os rather than ones that respond to a liciwch chi? more parochial challenge, perhaps?

[202] **Huw Lewis:** They do respond to the challenge of PISA. For instance, taking numeracy, where perhaps it's most self-evident, you can see now our young people beginning to study new GCSEs that are about mathematics and mathematics for further study but are also about everyday numerical reasoning and numeracy. They will be sitting two GCSEs in that regard, so the GCSEs have changed, and they have changed directly as a result of the lessons that PISA has taught us. We're also seeing, of course, Estyn alive to the LNF and the way in which it's been implemented in schools, so, when a school is inspected, that's part of the bread-and-butter way in which Estyn has gone about its business over the last couple of years. We're also seeing these things reflected in the categorisation discussions that go on. Again, the importance of categorisation even in comparison to an Estyn inspection—categorisation is a coproduction between the school, especially the leadership of the school, and outside, disinterested persons. So, in other words, the school has to think its way through issues like the LNF, which relate back to PISA, in order to have any chance of getting a yellow or a green categorisation, so much has changed as a result of PISA.

[203] **Simon Thomas:** You're in a position now, Minister, where you can perhaps be a little freer than you might have been in the past. You can look back at the situation we've arrived at in support of these key learning objectives, particularly school categorisation, which I think is a significant improvement on the first attempt at this, in that, as you rightly say, it identifies the schools that need support and then you have support mechanisms that are available. But do you at all think that you've rather overcomplicated the picture that you have in the range of support mechanisms available? Yes, you have the consortia, you still have a role for

local authorities, you have Schools Challenge Cymru; you have a slightly overcomplicated picture. If you would make a recommendation as to how school support could go forward, do you feel it could be simplified and made more streamlined for the future in response to the challenges of PISA?

[204] **Huw Lewis:** The aim has always been, the destination has always been, that Finnish-style, Scandinavian-style, self-improving school. At present, we're at the beginning of a journey towards that kind of system, in my mind. I'm always open, if people are saying things are overcomplicated and that there are too many initiatives and mechanisms—what I would want to hear is which ones would you remove at this point in time. I think that, as we do progress, there is a logic behind the argument that you put that, as the system becomes more self-sufficient and develops its own capacity, and heads towards self-criticism and self-improvement, many of these support structures and networks—bits of scaffolding, if you like—should be removed, and I think they should.

[205] I think in the first instance, though, we should be considering the next step being about handing more and more of this over to the profession rather than just removing things wholesale. I don't believe—and I think that honest teachers would say that this is true—that there is sufficient capacity within the profession, as we know it, in order to run all of this stuff on their own. A quick example would be continuing professional development, which I would picture as being eventually lodged with the profession in the workforce council—quality controlled, paid for, overseen and delivered by the profession themselves. The profession are not in a position to do that yet, and neither is the workforce council, but, in three or four years' time, they should be.

[206] **Simon Thomas:** We will return to that, I suspect.

[207] **Ann Jones:** Yes, I'm sure. Suzy.

[208] **Suzy Davies:** I just want to go back to this assertion that at least in Wales we know where every struggling school is, effectively, because of categorisation as much as anything else. We took evidence from Estyn in the previous session that, even now, some schools and their local authorities and, to a certain extent, the consortia, are surprised when they find themselves put into special measures or are given the Estyn report that they have. Now, we've had a period of categorisation, and we had banding before that. We had the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 three

years ago now, which relates to standards, and yet we've still got a quarter of schools in special measures. I appreciate that they can't do things overnight, but, with that much knowledge and apparent support, how come we've still got so many in statutory special measures?

[209] **Huw Lewis:** At this stage, my blunt response would be: there is a leadership problem that needs to be addressed if a school's in that sort of situation. If any headteacher were to come to me and say, 'Look, I've just been categorised as a red school and I have no idea how that happened', my response to them would be, 'Don't kid me on—you know precisely why this has happened. You've been part of a series of very involved conversations about how you got to that categorisation.' And the same would apply to the local authority too. I think we've moved on from an era when Estyn might settle on an inspection, let's say, of a local authority and then the local authority would be taken aback that they're found to be in special measures. That should no longer be the case. If you're in the business of understanding how your schools are doing and you can see that categorisation coming annually, on top of Estyn inspections, then you should have an intimate knowledge of what's going on. If it's a surprise to you, as a leader, you've been taking a nap.

[210] **Suzy Davies:** Well, thank you—that's very candid.

[211] **Ann Jones:** Aled, you've got a point on this and then we're going to move on to curriculum review.

[212] **Aled Roberts:** Rydym ni'n symud i gyfnod o newid sylweddol. Rydych chi wedi sôn am y fframwaith cymhwysedd digidol a rydym ni'n edrych ymlaen at weithredu argymhellion Donaldson a'r cwricwlwm newydd. A ydy Llywodraeth Cymru wedi dysgu unrhyw wersi oddi wrth y ffordd y cafodd y fframwaith llythrennedd a rhifedd ei gyflwyno? Rydych chi'n ymwybodol o'r feirniadaeth ymysg y proffesiwn ynglŷn â'r ffordd y cafodd ei gyflwyno a'r ffaith nad oedd adnoddau ar gael a bod yna gryn

Aled Roberts: We are moving to a period of substantial change. You've mentioned the digital competence framework and we're looking forward to implementing the Donaldson recommendations and the new curriculum. Has the Welsh Government learnt any lessons from the way that the literacy and numeracy framework was introduced? You are aware of the criticism among the profession regarding the way that it was introduced and the fact that resources weren't available and that there was quite a lot of criticism

dipyn o feirniadaeth o'r cwmni a regarding the company that was
gafodd ei benodi gan Lywodraeth appointed by the Welsh Government.
Cymru. Felly, a ydy'r pwyntiau yna yn Therefore, are those points being
cael eu derbyn gan y Llywodraeth, accepted by the Government, as we
wrth i ni symud i mewn i'r holl move in to all of these changes, if we
newidiadau yma, os ydym ni i are to guarantee that there is
warantu bod hyder o fewn y confidence in the profession, that the
proffesiwn, fod Llywodraeth Cymru Welsh Government itself is aware of
eu hunain yn ymwybodol o'r heriau the challenges that the profession is
mae'r proffesiwn yn eu hwynebu? facing?

[213] **Huw Lewis:** Yes, again, there were issues around the implementation of the LNF; it was a great big programme for a great big complicated system, and there probably were bumps in the road in terms of the initial implementation, but they were learned from at the time, and they were put right. I think any honest observer would say that, now, there is general understanding across all those thousands of professionals of what the LNF ought to look like in terms of their day-to-day working.

[214] There are other things in place now though that should make the implementation of the new curriculum a smoother process. For instance, we have digital communication now with every teacher—every single one of them—in a way that wasn't quite devolved even two years ago. So, any teacher that is keeping up to speed with developments, for instance, as their subject area curriculum development evolves, will be keeping up to speed with the information in real time; they shouldn't have to wait to attend a seminar to be told by someone that so and so is happening at key stage 2. This stuff will be in the Dysg newsletter; it will be there in Hwb, our digital resource for teachers; and the philosophy behind all this of course is that the pioneer schools embed this from the very beginning in the working practice of teachers.

[215] This curriculum won't be drawn up in my office and then done to schools. It won't be stuck to them; it won't be delivered to them. It will grow from the schools themselves, supported by Graham Donaldson, expert advisers who are working alongside him, Estyn and others. So, there is a very real difference. There is no package to be delivered. The 106 pioneer schools that I think we've got now will have the job of making sure that all the professionals concerned with their area of work are up to speed. I still do come across professionals who demand to know what's going on and say, 'Nobody told me this and so on'. And, without exception, these are

professionals that are not tuned into the electronic communication network that's aimed at them—the Dysg newsletter and Hwb. Every professional needs to understand that that's part of their daily work, to be up to speed with what's happening there.

[216] **Aled Roberts:** Mae yna rywfaint o gonsensws gwleidyddol ynglŷn â'r egwyddorion o leiaf y tu ôl i argymhellion Donaldson. Felly, beth bynnag yw lliw y Llywodraeth ar ôl Mai, mae'n debyg bydd y polisi yma'n cael ei weithredu. Felly, pa waith paratoadol sy'n cael ei wneud ar hyn o bryd o ran yr holl newid o ran deddfwriaeth a fydd yn rhaid mynd drwyddo fo, wrth ystyried bod yr amserlen yn eithaf tyn o ran hyd yn oed y Cynulliad nesaf?

Aled Roberts: There is some political consensus regarding the principle behind the Donaldson recommendations at least. So, whatever the colour of the Government after May, it seems that this policy will be implemented. So, what preparatory work is being undertaken at the moment in terms of all the legislative changes that will have to happen, given that the timetable is quite tight, even in terms of the next Assembly?

[217] **Huw Lewis:** That would be a matter for the next Assembly to sort out. You're quite right; there will be a legislative requirement behind the new curriculum—the curriculum for Wales. We need to take away all of the bits of the national curriculum of 1988 and all the legislative stuff that's hanging around that, and the subsequent accretions. I've got officials working on exactly what will be required, so that the incoming Minister in May should have a clear view of what legislation is required, but it undoubtedly will be required.

[218] I very much welcome the cross-party consensus around the spirit of Donaldson. I think that's a great strength of Graham Donaldson's work, and I don't claim any credit for it. I think we've had an exceptional piece of guidance really from Professor Donaldson, who has managed this consensus, not just politically, but professionally.

11:45

[219] Teachers are very excited about the Donaldson agenda, and I hope that will remain robust through the process. It will be in the best interests of young people that it does, although who knows; there might be new political actors in the Assembly post May, and goodness knows what they would think. But, I'm confident that the embedding of the Donaldson agenda in the

minds of educational professionals is sufficient now that everyone sees this as the settled will of the schools system in Wales. The schools system wants it.

[220] **Aled Roberts:** Felly, nid oes gwaith paratoadol yn cael ei wneud ar gyfer ysgolion gramadeg ar hyn o bryd. Jôc. [*Chwerthin.*]

Aled Roberts: Therefore, no preparatory work is being undertaken with regard to grammar schools at the moment. That's a joke. [*Laughter.*]

[221] **Ann Jones:** No, no, come on, we've got lots to do.

[222] **Aled Roberts:** Mae'r amserlen yn dynn. Y bwriad gwreiddiol oedd bod y fframwaith cymhwysedd digidol yn cael ei gyflwyno erbyn mis Medi 2016. A fydd yr amserlen yna yn cael ei derbyn?

Aled Roberts: The timetable is tight. The original intention was that the digital competency framework would be ready by September 2016. Will that timetable be accepted?

[223] **Huw Lewis:** Yes. On digital competency, yes. I've been taken aback actually at the speed with which the working group on digital competence has done its job. We will have that available to schools from September. I don't doubt that there'll be still work to do, but it will be up and running in schools from September. Again, that was not written by me or any of my officials. That's been taken on by a group almost entirely consisting of teachers. We had IT experts in there and advisers from the private sector as well, if I recall. But, they went away; they did that work, and we're ready to go in September. So, I'm hoping that spirit of enthusiasm around the agenda will translate itself into other elements now of the great big curriculum picture.

[224] **Aled Roberts:** Rwy'n siŵr bod aelodau'r pwyllgor yn croesawu'r ffaith bod Estyn wedi cadarnhau y bore yma eu bod nhw wedi cael rôl benodol o ran adnabod yr ysgolion hynny a gafodd eu penodi fel ysgolion arloesol. Ond, a allwch chi esbonio? Roedd rhestr o ysgolion arloesi a oedd yn cael eu dewis o ran datblygu'r cwricwlwm ac roedd rhestr

Aled Roberts: I'm sure that members of the committee welcome the fact that Estyn confirmed this morning that they've had a specific role in terms of identifying the schools that have been appointed as pioneer schools. But, can you explain? There was a list of pioneer schools that were being selected in terms of developing the curriculum and there

gwahanol o ran ysgolion a oedd yn cael eu dewis o ran arbenigedd digidol. Felly, sut yn union—. A fydd yna—. Rwy'n derbyn, hwyrach, fod Donaldson dipyn bach yn fwy rhydd na jest edrych ar y cwricwlwm fel rhestr o bynciau arbenigol, ond a ydy'r arbenigedd o ran y cwricwlwm o fewn ysgolion unigol yn cael ei ddatblygu o ran pynciau? Pan ofynnwyd y cwestiwn yn y lle cyntaf, nid oedd y rhestr yna wedi cael ei rhannu i ysgolion a oedd yn arloesol o ran *maths*, yn arloesol o ran Saesneg a Chymraeg. A allwch chi esbonio yn union sut bydd yr ysgolion arloesi yna yn bwydo i mewn i'r newidiadau o ran y cwricwlwm, wrth gofio, wrth gwrs, eich bod chi newydd ddweud mai nhw, yn hytrach na'ch swyddfa chi, a fydd yn datblygu'r holl waith yma?

[225] **Huw Lewis:** Yes, you're right. There are categories of pioneer schools: the digital, as you've said, which have almost completed their work on the first round of effort; curriculum—Donaldson schools, if you like; and there will also be new deal schools, looking at what demands there will be on the capacity of teachers to actually deliver on Donaldson and all the other stuff about moving towards a Master's profession that I've talked about, and workload. The pioneer schools won't work in a vacuum; they're already working. They won't be working in a vacuum. There will be experts in subject areas, of international standing. It will be open to them, within the budgets that I've allocated, to draw in really whoever they want to advise them on development in particular areas.

[226] So, a good chunk of the work will be about subject development. So, for example, I had correspondence this morning about our history curriculum. I don't doubt that there needs to be content overhaul in history. It does not, to my mind, reflect the demands of the Cwricwlwm Cymreig—that report that we accepted some while back now—and that will need a complete overhaul. I've signalled changes in religious education that I would

like to see happen. I think we should move to RPE—religion, philosophy and ethics—a subject area that is very alive to the real challenges of the twenty-first century in terms of how different cultures, religious backgrounds, and so on, operate in a free society, and how we guard against the dangers of bigotry and exclusivity and so on.

[227] So, yes, we're at the first stage of development, if you like, and, at this point, what the pioneer schools concerned with curriculum are looking at are the six areas of learning and experience, essentially. So, they've been getting together; they're looking at that. Everything must relate back to the six areas of learning and experience, but the subject-based, nitty-gritty work will flow from there. But, that has not really begun yet.

[228] **Aled Roberts:** Felly, sut mae'r **Aled Roberts:** Therefore, how is the gwaith rhaw yn digwydd? A ydy'r holl spadework happening? Are all the ysgolion sydd wedi cael eu penodi i schools that have been appointed fod yn ysgolion arloesi o ran y pioneer schools in terms of the cwricwlwm yn cyfarfod ar y cyd yn y curriculum meeting jointly on the six chwe maes, neu a oes yna ysgolion areas, or are there schools that have sydd wedi cael eu rhannu o fewn y been separated within the six areas chwe maes a fydd yn gyfrifol am that will be responsible for ddatblygu'r cwricwlwm? developing the curriculum?

[229] **Huw Lewis:** We're at the very beginning, as I say. I think it was in the first half of January that there was a get-together for heads of the curriculum pioneer schools. So, the headteachers for the pioneer schools got together on 13 January, and then there was a follow-up meeting for heads and subject leaders on 27 January. So, we're just at the very start. We've had those two initial get-togethers. I don't know if Steve might be able to expand.

[230] **Mr Davies:** The first meetings are establishing ways of working, the types of commitments that need to be made, how they will work as a whole group, and then how they will be broken down. The schools have been identified to cover the full matrix of subjects, so there's a degree of specialism. So, they've got the full matrix covered. This is a two- to three-year process for developing it, and it was critical that they understood their commitments from the outset and the ways of working. As they now move forward, they will be working in those areas of learning, but they will also be coming back as whole groups to make sure that that's being developed consistently. There will be that check with wider groups of schools as materials are developed, through Hwb. The intention is to lay the

foundations, and they have been laid in those two meetings, and detailed work will go on over the next two to three years.

[231] **Aled Roberts:** A oes yna unrhyw sgôp felly? Rydych chi wedi sôn am drosglwyddo cyfrifoldeb i'r proffesiwn. Rwy'n deall beth rydych yn ei ddweud bod hynny'n broses, a hwyrach bod yna feysydd lle nad ydynt yn barod ar hyn o bryd i dderbyn cyfrifoldeb. Ond, os ydym yn edrych ar gyfnod o ddwy neu dair blynedd cyn i'r cwricwlwm newydd yma fod ar waith, a oes yna unrhyw drafodaethau ynglŷn â'r ffordd y mae'r proffesiwn yn edrych ar y strwythurau mae'r Llywodraeth wedi'u cyflwyno ar hyn o bryd, gan gynnwys, dywedwch, categorieiddio? Os yw'r proffesiwn o'r farn nad yw categorieiddio yn ffitio i mewn i'r ffordd newydd o wneud pethau, a'r ffaith bod rhai cwestiynau ynglŷn â pha mor gadarn ydy hunan-asesu, sydd yn sail i'r categorieiddio, a ydy'r Llywodraeth yn agored i drafod hynny efo'r ysgolion arloesi yma, neu a ydy'r math yna o benderfyniad yn rhywbeth y bydd yn rhaid i'r Gweinidog, pwy bynnag fydd o neu hi, gadw cyfrifoldeb amdano fo?

Aled Roberts: Is there any scope therefore? You've mentioned transferring responsibility to the profession. I understand what you're saying that that is a process, and perhaps there are areas where they're not ready at the moment to have that responsibility. But, if we're looking at a period of two to three years before this new curriculum is up and running, have there been any discussions on the way the profession is looking at the structures that the Government has introduced at present, including, for example, categorisation? If the profession is of the view that categorisation does not fit in with the new way of doing things, and the fact that some questions remain about how robust self-evaluation is, which is the basis for categorisation, is the Government open to discussing that with these pioneer schools, or is that kind of decision something that the Minister, whoever he or she may be, will have to keep responsibility for?

[232] **Huw Lewis:** Certainly not at present, and I can't see any dilution or stepping away from, for instance, categorisation. We're really only in the second iteration of categorisation, and I've certainly not been subject to any series of demands from teachers, or anybody else really, demanding that categorisation be removed. But, accountability within the new curriculum will be an issue of discussion, obviously. There may need to be an evolution around things. We haven't yet established an advisory group, have we?

[233] **Mr Davies:** It's met once.

[234] **Huw Lewis:** We've met once, okay. So, we've got an accountability advisory group that will take all this stuff into consideration. I can't see, in the foreseeable future, in the run-up to delivery of the Donaldson curriculum in 2018, any change around categorisation other than perhaps a tweak here and there. It seems to be working extraordinarily well. But there might be other issues around accountability that the process will throw up and we'll need to discuss.

[235] **Aled Roberts:** Okay.

[236] **Ann Jones:** Okay. We'll move on to teaching reform. Simon, you've got some points on that.

[237] **Simon Thomas:** Diolch. **Simon Thomas:** Thank you. Minister, Weinidog, byddwch chi'n cofio dod i'r you will recall coming to committee pwyllgor a mynd â'r Ddeddf addysg taking the education Bill through, drwyddo, a oedd yn sefydlu Cyngor y which established the Education Gweithlu Addysg a gwaith Cyngor y Workforce Council and the work of Gweithlu Addysg. O edrych yn ôl, a the Education workforce council. ydych chi'n meddwl bod y Ddeddf Looking back, do you think that that yna wedi rhoi'r pwerau a'r ystod i'r legislation did provide the range of cyngor newydd yma i fod yn addas ar powers that this new council needed gyfer y cynllun diwygio sydd gyda chi so that it was fit for the reform ar gyfer y proffesiwn? programme that you have for the profession?

[238] **Huw Lewis:** No. That piece of legislation was a piece of work that needed to be done in order to establish the workforce council and led it bed in, but essentially, the workforce council is the General Teaching Council for Wales under new management, if you like. It is about registration and disputes around professional standards and so on. We will need to look again, or my successors will need to look again, at how the workforce council grows into a body that is much more like a general council, which is looking after its members, guiding its members, and challenging them as well in terms of their professional development. So, there's a whole raft of new—. But, it's important that the workforce council is established in law, and that it is bedding in. So that process was necessary.

[239] **Simon Thomas:** Diolch am **Simon Thomas:** Thank you for that, hynny, a diolch am gydnabod hynny. and thank you for acknowledging

Roedd rhai ohonom ni yn dweud yn y pwyllgor ar y pryd bod angen ehangu ar y ddeddfwriaeth. Ond, y prif wendid, maen ymddangos i mi, sydd gyda chi gyda'r cyngor ar hyn bryd, a'r weledigaeth wnaethoch chi roi i fi gynnu fach mewn ateb i gwestiwn arall, yw os ych am i'r proffesiwn arwain ei ddatblygiad proffesiynol ei hunan, ac os ych chi am i'r proffesiwn, rwy'n cymryd, wedyn, osod y safon, monitro ansawdd, a bod yn gyfrifol os nad yw ansawdd yn cael ei gyflawni yn y proffesiwn, byddai proffesiwn o'r fath yn disgwyl bod yng ngofal unrhyw gyngor—hynny yw, bydden nhw'n disgwyl mai nhw sy'n ethol y cyngor, gyda phobl o'r tu allan, wrth gwrs, ond bod yna gymysgedd gwahanol o sgiliau nad oes gennym yn y cyngor presennol. A yw hwn, felly, yn un o'r argymhellion y byddwc chi'n ei adael ar gyfer eich olynydd hefyd?

that. Some of us said in the committee at the time that the legislation should have been enhanced. But, the main weakness, as I understand it, that you have with the council at present, and the vision that you outlined to me earlier in responding to another question from me, is that if you want the profession to lead its own CPD, and if you want the profession, I presume then, to set the standard, to monitor quality, and to be responsible if those standards aren't reached within that profession, then such a profession would expect to be responsible for any such council—that is, they would expect to elect a council, with external people, of course, but that there is a different mix of skills that we do not currently have in the present council. Is this, therefore, also one of the recommendations that you would leave for your successor?

[240] **Huw Lewis:** Well, I've got to leave them something haven't I? [*Laughter.*]

[241] **Simon Thomas:** It's not over yet. [*Laughter.*]

[242] **Huw Lewis:** It's never over. We're on a continual journey here; this never ends. If you're heading towards a self-improving system, everyone in the system has to wake up every morning, acknowledge that there are weaknesses or jobs to be done and then get on with them. This is continual improvement that we're talking about. You're right about the workforce council; yes, I don't doubt that we will need to get a point where there is a greater element of accountability towards the professionals, which almost certainly means you'll have to have some kind of elected element to the governance of the council. We'll have to figure out how that works, and, as I've said before, we're also going to have to face the prickly issue of exactly how you have this very ambitious agenda around professional development

paid for. The current money in the system, in my view, as I've told you before, I don't think is sufficient, and the professionals are going to have to step up, as doctors do, and lawyers do, by contributing something themselves.

[243] **Simon Thomas:** You have said that before, and you're right that we've asked you before about this as well. In that sense, are you modelling anything that might be a first look at a professional system based on professional fees and, I would imagine, some kind of input nationally as well? There's a mix and match that might emerge from this.

[244] **Huw Lewis:** No, not as yet. I haven't got a group working on this or looking at figures. We can all take other professions as indicators of the kind of financial contribution, and how those general councils, or royal colleges of physicians and all the rest of it, all work, and we can draw our own conclusions. But, there's been no formal—no, not yet.

12:00

[245] **Simon Thomas:** In the meantime, however, within the new deal that you've instituted, there is a requirement on professional development—not a requirement, although I'd like there to be a requirement, but there's an expectation of professional development there. How are you able, without this full panoply—. As you've already admitted, you haven't got the full panoply yet of powers, and the right kind of structures in place at all right levels. How will you be able to monitor professional development over the next two or three years in the interim, at a time when you're asking the profession to implement a wholesale change, albeit a welcome wholesale change?

[246] **Huw Lewis:** There are some levers we can pull that don't rely necessarily on the terms and conditions of teachers being devolved, although that would give us the full panoply of powers to have a comprehensive conversation with the profession. But, with the professional learning passport, for instance, which is voluntary at present, although it would have to become mandatory at some point, there's a lot of take-up of that; professionals like it; they see this as a good idea where they can log their professional development and use it for future job applications and so on. And, of course, we can also take a look at what we're demanding in terms of initial teacher training; that's completely within our control. So, if we're taking those newly qualified teachers to a certain level, then the logic is that

the current workforce should meet that challenge too.

[247] I think we can go a very long way actually, with the goodwill of the profession, in terms of travelling down this road towards a Master's level profession without compulsion, because I think the professionals want it. But, a future administration would have to look, I think, at the complete picture only being possible with the devolving of terms and conditions of teachers.

[248] **Simon Thomas:** I agree with that, but I also think there's another area that we need to address, which is, if your vision is to come true, then surely there are going to be teachers who do not maintain professional standards, whichever way you want to describe that.

[249] **Huw Lewis:** Yes.

[250] **Simon Thomas:** Let's just call them 'bad teachers'. How, without—. Devolution of terms and conditions may help a little, but how do we get a system to, first of all, if you like, do the categorisation approach on those teachers, give them the support, and give them the help that they need? But, then, there comes a time when they may not be delivering for the new curriculum, for what we expect for the young people of Wales. Are you confident that we can have a self-regulatory system that can then direct those teachers towards the correct door, towards their future, and the future for the pupils in Wales as well?

[251] **Huw Lewis:** Yes, insofar as anything could ever be perfect. I think there are good practice examples amongst other professions of the way they do business around their members that are not meeting the published standards—whether it's midwives, nurses and so on and so forth. So, there has to be that destination in mind, I think, and from the very beginning, whoever's doing this will have to be very challenging in terms of what the workforce council becomes in being an impartial arbiter of the best professional standards, and not a trade union. There are trade unions to do trade union stuff. This would be much more of a professional college. But, there are good practice examples out there. They probably need some kind of legislative base, but that's a process that's some years ahead.

[252] **Simon Thomas:** Rydym wedi [253] **Simon Thomas:** We've trafod y ffordd rydym yn delio â'r discussed the way we deal with the proffesiwn fel ag y mae nawr. Rydych profession as it currently exists.

wedi crybwyll un o'r atebion fan hyn—sut rydym yn cael athrawon newydd, cymhwyso athrawon newydd a gwednewid hynny. Rydych wedi gosod allan eich dymuniad i wneud hynny. A fedrwch chi ddweud mwy wrthym ni heddiw ynglŷn â beth nawr yw'r amserlen a'r broses ar gyfer, yn gyntaf oll, adnabod y ganolfan, neu'r canolfannau dysgu newydd? Rydych wedi sôn yn y gorffennol am fynd allan i wahodd pobl i dendro fel petai ar gyfer y gwaith yma yng Nghymru. Lle ydyn ni bellach o ran cael system cymhwyso athrawon newydd?

You've mentioned one of the answers here—how we actually get new teachers, how new teachers become qualified and transforming that. You've set out your aspiration to do that. Can you tell us more today about what the timetable and the process is now for, first of all, identifying the new teaching centre, or centres? You've mentioned in the past about going out and inviting people to tender, as it were, for this work in Wales. Where are we now in terms of establishing a new teacher qualification system?

[254] **Huw Lewis:** We're quite well advanced, actually, already. Working backwards, I've signalled a first teaching of new courses, conceivably in new centres—at least probably in newly configured centres—by September 2018. So, what's happened thus far is that I've set up an accreditation task and finish group. They met in September. They've been having engagement sessions with the providers, and there were two important meetings held, both in January—early January, I believe—where representatives of the wider sector across the UK were brought together to meet our current providers and showcase best practice. So, the next step will be for actual accreditation and Welsh Government's description, if you like, of the courses we want to purchase. Now, the timetable around that—. It's pretty rapid.

[255] **Mr Davies:** It is rapid, but it will actually go into the—it won't be secured by the end of this period of Government.

[256] **Huw Lewis:** No, no.

[257] **Mr Davies:** This looks to be secured by the summer and then we'll be able to report back to this group.

[258] **Simon Thomas:** Just on the accreditation, is Estyn playing a role in helping set this up?

[259] **Huw Lewis:** Yes. Essentially, there will be an academic year from autumn 2016 to autumn 2017 for providers to organise themselves to meet

the new criteria and to decide, actually, if they're going to remain in the market, because these will be very exacting criteria with a higher level qualification and different types of course—different lengths of courses, in all likelihood. So, that academic year of 2016–17 will be the testing time.

[260] **Simon Thomas:** Just to be clear on that, that academic year is when the current providers will be trying to do this or when you might expect new providers to be—

[261] **Huw Lewis:** Both. And, you know, the door is open, really. Current providers may want to partner themselves with an organisation that's already in the business of Welsh teacher training or might want to partner themselves with a new organisation. We might find that new organisations form themselves in order to apply. My signal is: 'These are the courses we want. Give us your bid, if you like, for being able to fulfil those criteria.' In my mind, although it will not be me who makes this decision, I would not be constrained by past practice or habit in terms of the way we've done things in Wales. If, for instance, a wholly new provider from outside the UK were to come along and offer the right product, I'd consider it.

[262] **Simon Thomas:** You're not considering that after retirement yourself? [*Laughter.*]

[263] **Huw Lewis:** I'll have to write that down. That's a good idea. [*Laughter.*]

[264] **Simon Thomas:** In saying that, does that mean that, in writing these bids, you're not giving any steer at all in that there must be a geographical balance to this provision or that there must be this kind of—? Is it simply on the basis of the course content and delivered in the way the provider might bid for it to be delivered?

[265] **Huw Lewis:** Well, we've got to have a connection, for the sake of the qualifying teachers, between them and our schools and, of course, we'll have our own made-in-Wales curriculum as well by then, so they've got to relate to that. So, physically, it's going to have to be delivered in Wales, obviously. That doesn't mean, though, that the University of Helsinki couldn't be actually monitoring, providing staff, providing IT-based back-up or whatever it is, for those courses in order to operate. And the university of west Wales—not to name anyone in particular—could maybe partner themselves with the University of Helsinki in order to deliver that. A variety of combinations are possible.

[266] **Simon Thomas:** And what about the actual schools themselves? You've just mentioned that, and I wanted to ask you about how schools themselves might be developing under this model into a kind of university or model schools model, where you've got schools themselves being laboratories of research and teaching best practice and so forth. Is that part of how we do this?

[267] **Huw Lewis:** Yes, although, again, those decisions will be for a successor of mine. What is clear is that all schools will have to step up when it comes to teacher education and training, because we've asked Estyn to inspect on it now, so that we shouldn't have any school in Wales that is trying to duck out of its role in terms of initial teacher training.

[268] **Simon Thomas:** But we do know that some schools are much better than others at doing this.

[269] **Huw Lewis:** Well, yes, and some schools really hurl themselves at it with enthusiasm, and I don't see any reason to stifle that. I have floated the idea that we should have, perhaps, training schools that specialise. They may specialise in a particular subject area, for instance, but they could specialise in whatever way in terms of supporting student teachers and newly qualified teachers. Personally, I'd be very relaxed about the idea of having training schools in the way we have training hospitals and that they become features of our system. But those decisions would not be for me. Steve, you wanted to add something.

[270] **Mr Davies:** Yes. I think, looking at the accreditation, we are looking at shifting the balance between how much time teachers spend in the universities and actually how much time they spend in schools. So, quite rightly, you focus on, 'These schools have to be good schools.' So, what is happening in the regions is that we're developing teaching and learning hubs—we're developing different names but it's the same concept—and the capacity of some schools to be able to engage with these teachers who are coming through the new programmes. That's being practised through experienced teachers' continuous professional development. So, we have schools that have a lot of the features of the teaching schools in England that are being developed, so they're ready when the universities come through. But what's going to be critical with the universities is that they have to establish a different, stronger relationship with the schools in terms of maximising each area of responsibility.

[271] **Ann Jones:** There are a couple of areas I wanted to touch on, if I could, Minister, around how we, as a committee, will form a legacy report at the end of this fourth Assembly. I wanted to ask you about the educational outcomes for children from low-income households, which was a report that this committee undertook, and really whether you think that there has been—. You've said that you've seen an increase in the attainment, but how sustainable is that when we've seen the levels of poverty? That's nothing to do with this Assembly, obviously, because it's welfare reform from the UK Government, but how confident are you that we'll continue to see educational attainment rise for those children from low-income households?

[272] **Huw Lewis:** Well, I can only give you my opinion. My opinion is that there are certain key levers that need to be used for years to come in order to keep this momentum going. One is, of course, that there is the political will to maintain this as a priority. Another would be that critical actors like Estyn continue to inspect on the attainment of kids on free school meals and that it ties in with categorisation—I think that's critical, absolutely critical. I have to say that the primary thing in a lot of headteachers' minds in trying to break through into a green category is quite often that demand that the attainment level of free-school-meal kids is hit. And there is, of course, the pupil deprivation grant, which I think has allowed schools to relax around the agenda of targeting that particular group of young people. Quite often, teaching professionals are little bit reluctant to target, sometimes—to prefer some young people to others—and you can see why they have that twitchiness. But, with the PDG in place, the headteacher can relax, in terms of resources at least, safe in the knowledge that that money is there to back them up. But, these are my opinions around that issue.

[273] **Ann Jones:** Okay, thanks. One other thing from that report—we took evidence from a lot of parents—was the hidden cost of education around coursework. If a pupil was taking coursework—. For example, I used to call it cooking, but I don't know what the fancy term for it is. They were having to provide quite a lot of ingredients.

12:15

[274] By the time the parents had bought the ingredients for that particular meal, they probably could have fed the family for the whole week. You said it's about political will. I wonder whether there is anything that you will build in to make sure that those hidden costs don't escalate as we see the financial

challenges that local authorities and local education authorities are under.

[275] **Huw Lewis:** Well, our guidance is very clear to schools—that they should rein themselves in and think about these hidden costs. I’ve appeared—not in my pyjamas—at six o’clock in the morning in a Spar shop, desperately trying to find caster sugar. [*Laughter.*] And I’m sure a lot of parents have had similar experiences. ‘Please supply me with glitter at this unearthly hour of the morning.’ It sounds funny, but, for a lot of parents, that is a burden. But these are issues at present for boards of governors and headteachers, and it is something, to my mind, that chairs of governors and heads, in particular, ought to interrogate about their school practice on a regular basis. It would be difficult, I think, for a Minister to legislate for this, because we do want schools to use their imagination and to follow their own initiative. We don’t have state school No. 1 teaching exactly the same thing as state school No. 2. We don’t have that. So, there’s a balance to be struck, and schools need to be very alive to this agenda.

[276] **Ann Jones:** Okay, thanks.

[277] **Huw Lewis:** Just one further point.

[278] **Ann Jones:** Sorry, Emma.

[279] **Ms Williams:** Just to add to that point, the legislation is quite clear about what schools can and can’t charge for, but also we are seeing some very creative use of the PDG funding, with schools finding very non-stigmatising ways to make sure that, where children are not in a position to be able to bring materials into school, they’re provided for them in very subtle ways. I think that the change in focus in schools, the change in ethos, is really starting to feed through and that they’re being much more creative about how they use PDG funding to make sure they’re supporting children not just in the basics, but right across the curriculum.

[280] **Ann Jones:** Okay, thanks. I think that’s what I was after hearing because I think it’s encouraging to hear that. Suzy, you’ve got a point on the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013.

[281] **Suzy Davies:** Yes, just three or four questions on this. Obviously, the Act was introduced the best part of three years ago now, and it is one of those pieces of legislation that was heavily influenced by the findings of this committee, which is always worth remembering. We took evidence from

Estyn a little bit earlier on, saying that, while there have been improvements in particular parts of the school system in terms of standards, overall their conclusion is that the system's at a standstill—you know, going in the right direction, but that there are no great leaps forward as a result of the opportunities that were provided in that Act for improving standards. Do you have any sort of view about whether local authorities, primarily, have taken up the opportunities to intervene more readily in schools they think might be failing and whether they're encouraged by consortia enough to do that?

[282] **Huw Lewis:** Well, just to take you up on one thing, I don't see how the system can be moving forward and standing still at the same time.

[283] **Suzy Davies:** Generally, it's standing still, but there are bits within it that are moving forward. Some are going backwards as well.

[284] **Huw Lewis:** I would say it's generally moving forward and there might be the odd bit here and there that's standing still.

[285] **Suzy Davies:** There are bits that are going backwards as well—that's why.

[286] **Huw Lewis:** Well, let Estyn speak for us both—

[287] **Suzy Davies:** Yes.

[288] **Huw Lewis:** —because, of course, they're the impartial arbiter here. I think it—. Sorry, I've—.

[289] **Suzy Davies:** It's about whether the school standards and organisation Act has really given local authorities the prod that they needed.

[290] **Huw Lewis:** I think so. I think, perhaps even more than that, and the consolidation now of the work of consortia has demanded really—. By bringing local authorities into a pool of their peers in a consortium, if you like, they're continually exposed to what's going on outside the local authority area. If there is something there they need to play catch-up on, then, through the challenge and review events that I attend, they are cross-questioned on why they're not catching up with that. For instance, in GwE, if there's a piece of best practice that's running in Anglesey, then, you know, the question will be asked, 'Well, why aren't you doing this in Conwy?' and so on. You see—

[291] **Suzy Davies:** I'm a little more interested in the local authorities going into individual schools to shake them up a little bit.

[292] **Huw Lewis:** This is what transpires as a result of the new school improvement agenda. We've got to cast our minds back to where we were just a short while ago, where we had 22 local authorities acting pretty much in isolation from each other, some with areas of best practice or a bit of a curate's egg. What we have now at the moment is a situation where no local authority gets to do things behind closed doors any more. It is apparent to everyone in the consortium, and then apparent to me and to those people working with the consortia, if a local authority is not up to speed with the school improvement agenda; it's known—it's generally known. And, believe me, those very direct conversations have been had in each one of the consortium areas.

[293] **Suzy Davies:** Would you accept that there might still be some patchiness in this—

[294] **Huw Lewis:** Yes.

[295] **Suzy Davies:** —because I referred in an earlier question about some schools and some local authorities being surprised?

[296] **Huw Lewis:** Yes, absolutely. I could name and shame a few this morning, if you like.

[297] **Suzy Davies:** I'd be kind of tempted to ask you to. [*Laughter.*]

[298] **Huw Lewis:** It's no secret. It's much more visible and apparent. It's no secret there are issues in Powys; it's no secret there are issues in Pembrokeshire; it's no secret that there were issues in Monmouthshire, but they've been resolved to a marked degree. But we know these things, and these conversations are had very publicly now in front of the director of education and the leader of each local authority in the body of a meeting with their peers, and this happens regularly. I know Steve wanted to come in.

[299] **Mr Davies:** Fundamentally, we have moved forward on the relationship between regions and local authorities. Using the categorisation now, there is no hiding place. If the school is in a red category for two years, we have to be clear what has been done to address it. If the powers that are there from the

Act to be used haven't been used up to that point, then the expectation is that those powers would be applied. You're right; we are learning, but getting consistency within a region means that you've got one region working with five or six authorities in a consistent way. One of the key differences this year was learning from Schools Challenge Cymru with the AIBs—the intervention boards—which are monthly within a school and where the local authority, the region, the chair of governors and the school work with real intensity. All four regions have now taken that up with all of their schools in red and, in many cases, most of their schools in amber. So, there's been a significant increase of the use of powers but also the steps that are taken before they get to that stage of using the powers.

[300] **Suzy Davies:** Thank you for your answer on that. Just briefly on WESPs—the Welsh in education strategic plans—I appreciate that, Minister, it wasn't you who brought this particular piece of legislation forward, but certain members of this committee did try and strengthen the Act in terms of what WESPs may contain. I appreciate that there's been post-legislation regulation on this, but, in retrospect, do you think there was an opportunity in this particular Act to be clearer about what was required of WESPs, just very generally, now? I'm not asking you to pick on particular schools or anybody.

[301] **Huw Lewis:** No, it's a very involved subject, obviously. In terms of that piece of legislation, no, I don't think so, but what I would accept very readily, actually, is that, as we go through a few iterations of the WESP process, there are things being learned about how the process could be strengthened, which might be about legislation and might be about other ways of working, actually. But I think that legislation has taken several steps forward. You see, if you're a concerned parent or lobby group, quite legitimately, within a particular local authority area now, you have a process to get your teeth into in terms of the WESP, which didn't exist before. Essentially, you had a process where you lobbied councillors, but now there is an iterative process, year on year, which you can key into in order to get a strategy working around the Welsh language and the delivery of Welsh-language learning within your area. Now, that didn't exist before. I think that's critical.

[302] **Suzy Davies:** So, there's scope for more work to be done, even if it's not necessarily amending the Act, for example.

[303] **Huw Lewis:** Yes.

[304] **Suzy Davies:** It's all right; that's not a trick question.

[305] **Huw Lewis:** No, it's not a trick question. There's a democratic tension here, isn't there? This is the thing. We're operating in between the stated aims and ambitions of forming a realistic strategy, as opposed to the democratic right of the local authority to take decisions. So, we can't take away from that. But, we do have, at least, two cogs, if you like, working together now: the democratic process in the local authority alongside the conversation formulating the WESP, which never goes away.

[306] **Suzy Davies:** Okay. Thank you for that one as well. Just on that democratic point, just a final question, Chair: in my area, we've had two judicial reviews of school reorganisation based on confusion around the code, one in which the parents were successful, and in the second, the local authority was successful. What level of conversation do concerned, let's say, parents, or even councils in this case, have with Government about the interpretation of that code? I have to say, I think the code is pretty clear, and yet those two judicial reviews were based on interpretations of the code.

[307] **Huw Lewis:** Well, as direct a conversation as they would wish. I deal regularly with correspondence directly from concerned parents and parents' groups, and other organisations, and the response would be direct and rapid. One of the great advantages of working in Wales, as I've always said, is that we're relatively small so that there isn't some great delay or huge machinery around a response to a concerned parent, for instance.

[308] **Suzy Davies:** Perhaps it would help if I explained why I'm asking this question.

[309] **Huw Lewis:** Yes.

[310] **Suzy Davies:** The purpose, or part of the purpose, of this Act was to take a lot of this off the table of the Minister of the day, and I'm just wondering how much now is actually coming back as a result of local confusion about what the code in particular relates to.

[311] **Huw Lewis:** Not a huge amount, no; not in my experience. I don't know if—. Would you like to comment further? No; not really. It is different. The Minister is not continually the point of all lobbying, but there is a steady trickle of correspondence around providing clarity, points of advice, about how to go about objecting, for instance, within a process. Those are pretty

regular types of correspondence.

[312] **Suzy Davies:** And what about the local authority or local education authority? Do they approach you? I'm not asking what they're asking you, but do they come to Government for advice?

[313] **Huw Lewis:** No, not generally, but they shouldn't need to really, should they?

[314] **Suzy Davies:** Okay, that confirms what I thought, but thank you. Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Minister.

[315] **Ann Jones:** We've got three minutes left, and I am going to let Simon Thomas have one last question. I know we're going to finish dead on 12.30 p.m., because the Minister needs to go as well.

[316] **Simon Thomas:** Thank you. It's a question looking forward to the future, in a sense, because the next Government will still wrestle, I think, with the key question that probably will remain unresolved about this, which is the exact balance of funding that should go directly to schools, should go directly to local education authorities, should be retained for national priorities, and how you plan that. This is constantly fought-over ground, if you like. You've just had a Government that made a political commitment, which is fair enough, absolutely, to have 1 per cent for schools—statutory age, five to 16—of extra funding in that system above the Barnett consequential. So, you've maintained that, albeit with some questions, but you've maintained it; you've done your political job. Are you able to look back and say that that's made a difference to educational standards, and what would you say, going forward, should be the balance to be struck now between school delegated funding and that which has to be retained for national and regional priorities?

[317] **Huw Lewis:** Oh, goodness.

[318] **Simon Thomas:** You've got two and a half minutes. [*Laughter.*]

[319] **Ann Jones:** Yes, 140 characters. [*Laughter.*]

[320] **Huw Lewis:** First of all, yes, I'm confident the 1 per cent commitment has provided a degree of insulation around our schools that has helped them through a difficult time of austerity. It was only deliverable, incidentally,

through the good offices of the Welsh Local Government Association—all political stripes and colours represented within it—which shared an ambition to take care of schools in difficult times, and I want to pay tribute to them.

12:30

[321] I think, in answer to the second part of your question, we are starting to stray into manifesto commitments, really, and I think it's a legitimate part of the political process that parties should make their democratic pitch for the priority of spending on schools. I'll be making recommendations to—

[322] **Simon Thomas:** I wasn't trying to tempt you in that sense. It's a fundamental—. Just a final thing would be: have you seen the need to retain some element of central and regional funding in order to support your priorities?

[323] **Huw Lewis:** Yes, most definitely, and most particularly in Wales, actually. I think we've got a number of large rural authorities in particular that, if left to direct funding for schools, those schools would find themselves in desperate straits almost immediately—within the first financial year. For schools in Gwynedd, Powys, Ceredigion and Pembrokeshire, school transport alone would cripple the budget. So, we do need that community of interest around schools, and we can argue then politically about how far it should extend.

[324] **Simon Thomas:** Okay.

[325] **Ann Jones:** There we go; spot on. I think that's the first time, Minister, we've managed to actually finish dead on time, but I'm going to delay you now by a couple of minutes. I just wanted to say, as I started off by saying, I think this probably will be the last time you'll appear before this committee, unless something happens whereby we do have to ask you back in. Just to say 'thank you' to you and your officials who have come in and provided papers, and also for your written papers, when you've appeared, alongside that. There are lots of other issues we could have asked about today, but time has beaten us. So, I say, 'Thank you very much' and wish you well for whatever you do, post-May.

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

[327] **Ann Jones:** You know what your future is post-May; there are those of

us around the table who don't know what our future is post-May, but we hope that we'll be back to scrutinise your successor. So, thank you very much for coming to this committee. We feel as if you've been one of us. I know you've never liked it, but that nameplate has stayed there quite a lot, and we have it out quite regularly as well. So, thanks very much.

[328] **Huw Lewis:** Thank you, Chair. I was never meant to enjoy it, I don't think. [*Laughter.*] It certainly has always been useful for the process as a whole, of course. Thank you very much.

[329] **Ann Jones:** Thank you very much.

12:32

Papur i'w Nodi
Paper to Note

[330] **Ann Jones:** Can we note the paper to note? In fact, it's the budget letter to the Minister. He may not be as gracious when he reads it. Also, just to remind you, there is no formal meeting next week, but that we are doing follow-up work around adoption. Okay. With that, I'll close the meeting.

Daeth y cyfarfod i ben am 12:32.
The meeting ended at 12:32.