



Cynulliad
Cenedlaethol
Cymru

National
Assembly for
Wales

Cofnod y Trafodion The Record of Proceedings

[Y Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg](#)

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

15/02/2017

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from the Meeting

Cofnodir y trafodion yn yr iaith y llefarwyd hwy ynddi yn y pwyllgor. Yn ogystal, cynhwysir trawsgrifiad o’r cyfieithu ar y pryd. Lle y mae cyfranwyr wedi darparu cywiriadau i’w tystiolaeth, nodir y rheini yn y trawsgrifiad.

The proceedings are reported in the language in which they were spoken in the committee. In addition, a transcription of the simultaneous interpretation is included. Where contributors have supplied corrections to their evidence, these are noted in the transcript.

Aelodau'r pwyllgor yn bresennol
Committee members in attendance

Mohammad Asghar Bywgraffiad Biography	Ceidwadwyr Cymreig Welsh Conservatives
Hefin David Bywgraffiad Biography	Llafur Labour
John Griffiths Bywgraffiad Biography	Llafur Labour
Llyr Gruffydd Bywgraffiad Biography	Plaid Cymru The Party of Wales
Darren Millar Bywgraffiad Biography	Ceidwadwyr Cymreig Welsh Conservatives
Lynne Neagle Bywgraffiad Biography	Llafur (Cadeirydd y Pwyllgor) Labour (Committee Chair)
Julie Morgan Bywgraffiad Biography	Llafur Labour

Eraill yn bresennol
Others in attendance

Simon Brown	Cyfarwyddwr Strategol, Estyn Strategic Director, Estyn
Maureen Harris	Pennaeth Ysgol Uwchradd Gatholig yr Esgob Hedley a Llywydd Cymdeithas Arweinwyr Ysgolion a Cholegau Cymru Headteacher of Bishop Hedley RC High School and President of the Association of School and College Leaders Cymru
Claire Morgan	Cyfarwyddwr Strategol, Estyn Strategic Director, Estyn
Tim Pratt	Cyfarwyddwr Cymdeithas Arweinwyr Ysgolion a Cholegau Cymru Director of the Association of School and College Leaders Cymru
Meilyr Rowlands	Prif Arolygydd EM, Estyn HM Chief Inspector, Estyn
Rob Williams	Cyfarwyddwr Polisi, Cymdeithas Genedlaethol y Prifathrawon Cymru Director of Policy, National Association of Head Teachers Cymru

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

Jon Antoniazzi	Clerc Clerk
Sarah Bartlett	Dirprwy Glerc Deputy Clerk
Michael Dauncey	Y Gwasanaeth Ymchwil Research Service

*Dechreuodd y cyfarfod am 09:30.
The meeting began at 09:30.*

**Cyflwyniad, Ymddiheuriadau, Dirprwyon a Datgan Buddiannau
Introductions, Apologies, Substitutions and Declarations of Interest**

[1] **Lynne Neagle:** Okay. Good morning, everyone. Can I welcome you all to this morning's meeting of the Children, Young People and Education Committee? We've received no apologies for absence. Are there any declarations of interest that Members would like to make?

[2] **Llyr Gruffydd:** Mi ddylwn **Llyr Gruffydd:** I should declare that ddatgan fy mod yn aelod o fwrdd I'm a member of a governing body, llywodraethol, gan bod Estyn yma, a as Estyn is here, and I'm also one of hefyd fy mod i'n un o lywyddion the honorary presidents of the anrhydeddus Cyngor Cymreig Council for Wales of Voluntary Youth Gwasanaethau Ieuenctid Cymru. Services.

[3] **Hefin David** I am currently a member of Caerphilly County Borough Council, should we talk about local authorities.

[4] **Lynne Neagle:** Okay. Thank you both.

**Craffu ar Adroddiad Blynyddol Estyn 2015–2016
Scrutiny of Estyn Annual Report 2015–16**

[5] **Lynne Neagle:** Okay. Item 2, then, this morning is our scrutiny session on Estyn's annual report for 2015–16, and I'm very pleased to welcome Meilyr Rowlands, HM chief inspector, Claire Morgan, strategic director, and

Simon Brown, strategic director. Thank you very much for coming this morning. Would you like to make any opening remarks?

[6] **Mr Rowlands:** Not really, no. I'm very pleased to have the opportunity to discuss what is a detailed and comprehensive and balanced report. So, it's good to have the time to unpack some of the issues behind it. It's based on extensive evidence, and I look forward to the discussion.

[7] **Lynne Neagle:** Okay. Lovely. Thank you very much. We'll go to questions from Members, then, and I've got Llyr Gruffydd first.

[8] **Llyr Gruffydd:** Bore da. **Llyr Gruffydd:** Good morning. Amrywioldeb—*variability*—yw un o'r Variability is one of the main themes or main messages in your report this year, between schools and within schools also, perhaps. Now, this was a message in last year's report, and, certainly, there is an identification of the gap between the best and the worst, shall we say, and that has happened in previous reports as well. So, just to begin with, to what extent are you concerned that not enough is being done to address this?

Felly, So, just to begin with, to what extent are you concerned that not enough is being done to address this?

jest i ddechrau, a gaf i ofyn i ba are you concerned that not enough is being done to address this?

raddau rŷch chi'n poeni nad oes being done to address this?

digon yn cael ei wneud i fynd i'r afael being done to address this?

â hyn?

[9] **Mr Rowlands:** Wel, mae rhywun **Mr Rowlands:** Well, one is naturally concerned. We do have excellent schools in Wales, and other excellent providers. But, as you have noted, the gap between the best and the rest is something that is a cause for concern. We need to tackle this at all levels, I believe—at the school level, at the authority and consortium level, and at a national level. The annual report gave specific attention to some of the things that schools themselves can do. It does relate to leadership—that the leaders should

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ag arweinyddiaeth—bod yr arweinyddiaeth yn mynd i'r afael ag ansawdd yr addysgu a'r dysgu yn benodol, a gwneud hynny drwy wella datblygiad staff: hynny yw, creu diwylliant, creu'r amodau, fel gall athrawon rannu a thrafod eu ymarfer gyda'u cydweithwyr mewn ffordd agored, fel eu bod nhw'n gallu dysgu oddi wrth ei gilydd, o fewn y sefydliad, a hefyd gyda sefydliadau eraill.

[10] Mae yna bethau hefyd—rwy'n siŵr y byddwn ni'n trafod hyn yn nes ymlaen—y gall y lefel ganol, sef yr awdurdodau a'r consortia, eu gwneud, ac mae yna bethau mwy hirdymor, wrth gwrs, mae'n rhaid i ni eu gwneud ar lefel genedlaethol, fel gwella ansawdd hyfforddiant cychwynnol athrawon, a gwella ansawdd yr arweinyddiaeth trwy sefydlu, er enghraifft, yr academi arfaethedig.

[11] Mae yna amrywiaeth o fewn ysgolion, a hefyd rhwng ysgolion, ac rwy'n credu ei bod hi'n werth nodi rywbeth ynglŷn â hynny ar y pwynt yma, sef, weithiau mae pobl yn dweud, 'Wel, pa un yw'r broblem fwyaf?' Mewn gwirionedd, yr un broblem yw e, achos pan fyddem ni'n dweud bod ysgol yn dda, neu bod yr arweinyddiaeth yn dda yn yr ysgol, neu bod yr addysgu yn dda yn yr ysgol yna, beth rŷm ni'n ei ddweud mewn gwirionedd ydy bod yr addysgu, neu'r arweinyddiaeth, neu'r ysgol, yn gyson dda. Beth sy'n

tackle the quality of the teaching and learning specifically, and that that should be done by improving staff development: that is, creating a culture and putting the conditions in place so that teachers can share and discuss best practice with their colleagues in an open way, so that they can learn from each other's experiences within the organisation, but also between organisations.

There are also things—and I'm sure we'll come on to this later—that the central level, namely the local authorities and the consortia, can do, and there are more long-term things that we have to do at a national level, for example, improving the quality of initial teacher training, and improving the quality of leadership, for example, by establishing the proposed academy.

There is variability within schools, and also between schools, and I do think it's worth noting something on that particular point, namely that, occasionally, people say, 'Well, which is the greatest problem?' The reality is that it's the same problem, because when we say that a school is performing well, or that leadership is strong in a school, or that the education is good in that school, what we're really saying is that the education, or the leadership, or the school, is consistently good. What makes for adequate provision is that

gwneud darpariaeth yn ddigonol yw ei fod e yn anghyson. So, mae'r anghysondeb yna—. Mewn ysgolion a darparwyr eraill yr ym ni'n nodi eu bod nhw'n ddigonol, mae yna bocedi o arfer da ond nid yw'n gyson. Felly, dyna, mewn gwirionedd, sy'n achosi yr amrywioldeb ar lefel y system, bod gennych chi amrywioldeb yn y pocedi yna o ddarparwyr. Nid ydw i'n gwybod os yw hynny'n ddigon o ateb.

[12] **Llyr Gruffydd:** Wel, yn sicr, rŷch chi wedi ei gwneud hi'n glir fod yna ystod eang o bethau sydd angen eu gwneud er mwyn mynd i'r afael â hyn, ond, yn ei hanfod, yr hyn rwy'n gofyn yw: a ydych chi'n teimlo, gan fod hwn wedi bod yn nodwedd o adroddiadau ers nifer o flynyddoedd erbyn hyn, a'i bod yn dal, yn amlwg, yn un o'r brif negeseuon, a'r awgrym clir i fi fan hyn yw nad oes digon wedi digwydd, ac efallai bod yna sawl menter wahanol ar y gweill neu'n rhedeg ar hyn o bryd—onid yw hi'n resyn, efallai, nad yw'r awdurdodau lleol a'r consortia wedi gwneud mwy hyd at nawr?

[13] **Mr Rowlands:** Rydw i'n meddwl eich bod chi'n iawn. Fe wnaethom ni arolygu'r pedwar consortiwm am y tro cyntaf llynedd, ac fe wnaethom ni ddweud yn yr adroddiadau hynny nad oedd y consortia yn gwneud digon i fynd i'r afael gydag amrywioldeb, yn enwedig ar lefel ysgolion uwchradd.

[14] **Llyr Gruffydd:** A rhannu arfer

it is inconsistent. So, that inconsistency—. In schools and other providers where we note that they are adequate, there are pockets of good practice but it isn't consistent throughout the system. That's what leads to this variability that we see at the system level, that you have variability within those pockets from providers. I don't know if that answers your questions sufficiently.

Llyr Gruffydd: Well, certainly, you've made it clear that there is a wide range of things that need to be done to address this, but, essentially, what I'm asking is: do you feel, as this has been a feature of reports for a number of years, and it's still one of the main messages, and the clear suggestion to me here is that not enough has happened, and perhaps there are a number of different initiatives on the go at the moment, but isn't it a matter of regret that local authorities and the consortia haven't done more up until now?

Mr Rowlands: I think you are right. We inspected the four consortia for the first time last year, and we stated in those reports that the consortia weren't doing enough to tackle variability, particularly at the secondary school level.

Llyr Gruffydd: And sharing good

da, yn amlwg, yw un o'r nodweddion pwysicaf, byddwn i'n tybio, oherwydd y broblem, yn aml iawn, gydag ansawdd, yw bod ysgolion yn ynysig ac efallai ddim yn gweld eu hunain yn y cyd-destun ehangach o beth yw ansawdd, neu pa fath o ansawdd y dylen nhw gwrdd ag e. A oes yna ddigon yn digwydd nawr i rannu'r arfer da yna?

[15] **Mr Rowlands:** Rŷch chi'n iawn taw dyna ydy un o'r brif bethau a ddylai ddigwydd. Mae'r dystiolaeth sydd gyda ni yn ddigon clir fod yr ysgolion gorau, a darparwyr eraill—rwy'n dweud 'ysgolion', ond mae'n wir am ddarparwyr eraill hefyd—yn creu rhwydweithiau eang, ac maen nhw'n fywiog iawn yn mynd o gwmpas yn gweld arfer da, ac yn dysgu oddi wrth, a helpu, sefydliadau llai sydd ddim cystal â nhw. Mae hynny yn sicr yn wir yn yr ysgolion gorau. Mae rhywun yn aml yn meddwl, 'Wel, beth sydd o fantais i ysgol dda i helpu ysgol sydd ddim cystal?', ond, os wnewch chi siarad gyda'r ysgolion hynny, maen nhw'n dweud nid oes ots beth yw'r bwlch rhwng yr ysgolion hynny, maen nhw'n dysgu rhywbeth bob tro y maen nhw'n helpu ysgol arall. Ar y llaw arall, mae'r darparwyr salaf, maen nhw'n ynysig. Nid ydyn nhw'n creu'r rhwydweithiau. Maen nhw'n edrych i mewn, a ddim yn gwella.

[16] **Llyr Gruffydd:** Agwedd arall o amrywioldeb, efallai, yw'r bwlch mewn perfformiad rhwng bechgyn a

practice, clearly, is one of the important features, I would assume, because the problem, quite often, with quality, is that schools are isolated and perhaps don't see themselves in the wider context of what quality is, or what sort of quality they should be achieving. Is there enough going on at the moment to share that good practice?

Mr Rowlands: You're right that that is one of the main things that should happen. The evidence that we have is quite clear that the best schools and other providers—I'm saying 'schools', but it's true of other providers too—do create broad networks, and they are very active in identifying good practice, and learning from and helping other smaller organisations, very often, who aren't performing as well. That certainly is true in the finest schools. One often thinks, 'Well, what is beneficial in terms of an effective school helping a less effective school?', but, if you speak to those schools, they will say that it doesn't matter what the gap between those schools is, they learn something every time they provide assistance to a school that is not performing as well. On the other hand, the poorest performers do tend to be isolated. They don't create those networks. They are inward looking and don't improve.

Llyr Gruffydd: Another aspect of variability, perhaps, is the gap in performance between girls and boys

merched, a disgyblion o gefndiroedd difreintiedig i'w cymharu, efallai, â disgyblion eraill. Mae'r bwlch yna yn dueddol o dyfu wrth iddyn nhw symud drwy eu gyrfa ysgol. Beth ych chi'n meddwl y mae hynny'n ei ddweud wrthym ni ynglŷn â gallu'r system addysg i leihau anghyfartaledd yn hytrach na'i wneud e'n waeth?

[17] **Mr Rowlands:** Rydw i'n meddwl bod y gwahaniaeth rhwng bechgyn a merched, a'r gwahaniaeth sy'n cael ei achosi gan ddifreintedd yn rhywbeth sydd yn—. Gall y system addysg gyfrannu at gau y bwlch yna, ond all ysgolion ddim ei wneud e yn llwyr ar ben eu hunain. Mae'r pethau yma yn ddwfn iawn mewn cymdeithas. Mae'n wir fod y bylchau hynny yn ehangu fel mae'r plant yn mynd yn hŷn. Nid ydw i'n meddwl taw bai y system addysg neu darparwyr unigol yw hynny, er y medr sefydliadau unigol wneud y bwlch yna yn llai; maen nhw'n medru cyfrannu ato fe. Mi ydym ni wedi cyhoeddi nifer o adroddiadau ar beth y gall addysg wneud i leihau'r bwlch oherwydd difreintedd yn arbennig, ac, yn sicr, mae yna nifer o bethau y gall ysgol eu gwneud, ond yn y tymor hir mae rhaid iddyn nhw wneud hynny drwy ymgysylltu gyda'r gymdeithas a gyda rhieni yn benodol. Oherwydd bod hwn, rydw i'n meddwl, yn ei hanfod yn broblem gymdeithasol, mae hynny'n golygu bod yn rhaid i'r system addysg a'r ysgolion fynd i'r afael â'r gymdeithas—eu bod nhw'n

and between disadvantaged pupils compared, perhaps, with other pupils. That gap tends to grow wider as they progress through the school system. What does that tell us about the ability of the education system to reduce inequality rather than exacerbate it?

Mr Rowlands: I do think that the gap between girls and boys and the issue of disadvantage is something that—. The education system can contribute to closing that gap, but the schools can't do it all alone. These things are very deep-seated problems in our society. It is true to say that those gaps tend to widen as children grow older. I don't think that it's necessarily the fault of the education system or the fault of individual providers, although individual institutions can narrow that gap; they can contribute to that narrowing. We have published a number of reports on what education can do to narrow the gap, particularly in terms of disadvantage, and, certainly, there are a number of things that a school can do, but, in the long term, they have to do that through engagement with the wider society, and particularly with parents. Because this, essentially, is a social problem, that means that the education system and schools do have to tackle the societal issues, and they should be creating a system of community-focused schools, if you like. That is

creu system o ysgolion cymuned ganolog, fel petai. Dyna beth mae'r ysgolion sydd fwyaf llwyddiannus yn cau y bylchau yma yn ei wneud. what the most successful schools in terms of closing these gaps do do.

[18] **Llyr Gruffydd:** Felly mater o efelychu hynny'n ehangach o fewn y gyfundrefn addysg, efallai, yw hi, ie? Bod yna ddim digon wedi'i wneud i sicrhau bod hynny'n nodwedd gyffredin yn hytrach na'n rhywbeth sy'n perthyn i ddim ond rhai. **Llyr Gruffydd:** Therefore, it's a matter of emulating that further in the education system. Perhaps not enough has been done to ensure that that is a common feature, rather than something that relates just to some places.

[19] **Mr Rowlands:** Ie, yn sicr. Mae yna ddim digon o adroddiadau gan Estyn a gan ymchwilyr eraill o'r math o beth sydd yn llwyddiannus. **Mr Rowlands:** Well yes, certainly. Estyn has produced a number of reports, as have other researchers, in terms of what can be successful.

[20] **Llyr Gruffydd:** Diolch. **Llyr Gruffydd:** Thank you.

[21] **Lynne Neagle:** Thank you. Right, I've got, on this, Oscar and then Julie. On this, Oscar.

[22] **Mohammad Asghar:** Thank you very much indeed. I think that Estyn's report has always believed that the system is not doing enough to enable able and talented pupils to fulfil their potential; that's Estyn's report. You just mentioned, Meilyr, that there are some social elements involved in order to get that achievement by the schoolchildren. So, what do you mean by those social aspects in the education system?

[23] **Mr Rowlands:** I think in terms of the more able and talented, it's not so much necessarily the social issues. I don't think schools—and the education system more generally—have done enough. We know that there are unintended consequences of schools focusing, for example, on the level 2 inclusive performance indicator. That encourages schools, for example, to focus on children on the borderline between C and D grades, and possibly not giving enough support to those who could get As and A*s. So, there are some things within the educational system that could be done differently.

[24] When we looked at regional consortia, for example, we saw that they didn't analyse in enough detail the differences between different groups of

pupils. That's relevant to boy-girl and disadvantaged, but also the more able. We've produced reports on the good practice that schools can undertake to help more able and talented pupils. So, I think one good thing from the annual report this year is that that particular issue of more able has had quite an airing. So, I hope now that people will be taking this quite seriously. There is quite a lot of evidence that this is the case: we've seen it in primary schools—a third of our primary school reports noted that the more able didn't get enough support. I've mentioned the consequences of some of the performance indicators at GCSE and the same thing is true about A-level. But it was through, actually, into further education as well. So it is, I think, a more general issue, and it also came out in some of the Programme for International Student Assessment results as well.

[25] **Lynne Neagle:** Can I just ask—? You mentioned the problem with the performance measure of the level 2 plus. It was our understanding that the Welsh Government were going to move to a different system of measuring performance—one that did give value to higher results—but that seems to have been put on the back burner. What is your understanding of that position?

[26] **Mr Rowlands:** I think my understanding is the same as yours. I think they were saying that there wouldn't be as much attention given to the level 2 plus going forward. Certainly, our view in Estyn is that data are useful. We need to know how many children pass their GCSEs. GCSEs are important qualifications for young people. But when Estyn does their inspection work, we look at the whole range of data available and we analyse them at all levels. So, I think, when giving predominance to a particular performance indicator, you will always have the danger of the system trying to game that.

09:45

[27] **Lynne Neagle:** But the Welsh Government were going to move to a capped points measure, weren't they, which would have been a more accurate reflection of the performance of all the pupils? That doesn't seem to be happening now. Is that correct?

[28] **Mr Rowlands:** I don't know, to be perfectly honest. I thought they were moving. I mean, we've always had a capped average-points score, but the rules for calculating that were going to be changed. I'm assuming that that is going ahead.

[29] **Lynne Neagle:** Okay.

[30] **Mr Rowlands:** But the problem, in my view, is that any performance indicator will generate unintended consequences—it doesn't really matter what it is. And there's some indication that that capped points score has already caused some unintended consequences, in narrowing the curriculum.

[31] **Lynne Neagle:** Okay. Thank you. Julie.

[32] **Julie Morgan:** Yes, I wanted to follow up the questions about the gap in performance. And you said one of the key things was to have community-focused schools. I just wondered if you could tell us what you see is a community-focused school.

[33] **Mr Rowlands:** Well, as I said, we published, I think, something like six or seven reports on deprivation, one after the other, and then we published a summary of that. And we said there are 10 things that a school can do, internally, to help deprived children, and then we said there were 10 other things they could do in the community. So, parenting programmes, on-site services, community participation, out-of-school-hours learning, nurture groups, team around the family, family learning, and pooling the resources of the pupil deprivation grant with other schools. So, those were some examples of specific things that schools could do that would help free-school-meals children in particular.

[34] **Julie Morgan:** And do you have an estimate of what percentage of schools follow those proposals?

[35] **Mr Rowlands:** We could give you a list of examples of good practice schools; I can't tell you off the top of my head, I'm afraid.

[36] **Ms Morgan:** I mean, there are schools within the report, particularly in the section where we identify the excellent schools. There's one of them, Cefn Hengoed in Swansea, where over 40 per cent of the pupils there are eligible for free school meals, but it's a school that has constantly improved, and, at its last inspection, last year, was awarded 'excellent' right across all areas. But it is a school that's built that success on effective partnerships, with parents and the community, in order to meet the needs of the learners. So, we have some success in the system, where schools are highly engaged with their community, and with other stakeholders, to make sure that the pupils' needs are met, and that they have every chance of success in their

school system.

[37] **Julie Morgan:** I mean that sounds like a brilliant example. I just wanted to know how widespread that sort of practice was

[38] **Mr Rowlands:** I think what you find is that you have this continuum: that some schools will be doing hardly any of those things that I mentioned, to schools like Cefn Hengoed that are probably doing them all, and then many schools will be in the middle—they will do some of these strategies, but not all of them.

[39] **Ms Morgan:** But we'd be happy to give you some supplementary evidence on that.

[40] **Julie Morgan:** Okay. I think that would be very useful, because I think this is a crucial area.

[41] **Lynne Neagle:** Thank you.

[42] **Mr Rowlands:** It wouldn't be, I think, an exact science, because, as I say, there's no definition of what a community school is, and what they should offer—that was our suggestion of some basic things that schools should be doing, to close the deprivation gap. So, there's no definition of what a community school is, and, as I say, many schools will be doing some of those things, but not the whole—. But we can certainly give you some examples of good practice.

[43] **Lynne Neagle:** Okay. Thank you.

[44] **Julie Morgan:** Thank you very much.

[45] **Lynne Neagle:** In last year's report, you highlighted the difficulty of comparing samples of different years, and basically said that changes between years were not statistically significant, but there seems to be less emphasis on that in this year's report. Can you comment on that?

[46] **Mr Rowlands:** It still stands; it's still true. The reason why we gave a detailed explanation of that last year is that we launched a data tool on our website that allows anyone to access all our inspection outcome data from 2010 and it goes into far more detail than we have in the annual report for all the areas that we inspect—all the sectors. That is available for everyone to

use and, because we were launching that, I thought it was important to make the point—the two-headed point really—that the effect of sampling is that you can't on the one hand simply say, 'It was 71 per cent last year, and it's 70 per cent this year, so it's gone down'—it's a bit more subtle than that. On the other hand you can't say, 'Well, they're different samples that we've looked at, so we can't make any comparison at all.' You've got to be relatively sophisticated in the statistical analysis that you give. So, last year, we did include some graphs that had error bars in them in order to make that point. If people think that's useful, we can do that moving forward, but it does make the graphs that little bit more complicated.

[47] I think the other points to make are that, although you have to be fairly sophisticated statistically in these things, the evidence that we have in Estyn is both qualitative and quantitative. I think that's one of the points that we've been trying to emphasise to all the providers that we inspect. It's not just the grades or the judgments that we give; you need to read the whole report. In fact, the wealth of evidence in the report is more important in one sense than the overall grades. What we would like people to do at an institutional level, but also nationally, is to concentrate on what the actual issues are.

[48] And the other point I think I should make on this particular issue is that it's not just from inspection that we get our evidence. We do a whole range of national thematic reports and visits to providers that provide us with other information on the system, as well as the inspection data per se.

[49] **Lynne Neagle:** Thank you. And in next year's report you're going to provide an overview of the seven-year inspection cycle we've been in. Are you able to give the committee any indication of what you think the headline issues are likely to be?

[50] **Mr Rowlands:** Yes, I think I can because all this stuff is in the public domain. We've published six annual reports for that seven-year cycle, and you can see that there hasn't been a lot of increase in the number of providers that are good or better. There has been—. As I said, underneath those headlines, there is an awful lot happening in the education system and there is evidence of progress with many of the basics in terms of basic literacy and numeracy, in terms of behaviour and attendance: those things that are absolutely crucial for children to be ready to learn. So there is evidence of progress there. The other consideration I think, in looking back over the last five, six, seven years, is the extent of change that's been for the

system. We've seen the literacy and the numeracy, and now the digital framework being introduced. We've seen a revolution in the way in which schools are supported. We've seen the establishment of regional consortia. We've seen the foundation phase being established. We've seen GCSEs and A-level syllabuses changing, particularly literacy, language, numeracy and mathematics. So, there have been huge changes during this period. I think it's to the credit of the profession that they've been able to maintain standards while getting to grips with and establishing these very important changes, which we all hope will bear fruit in due course.

[51] **Lynne Neagle:** Thank you. Llyr.

[52] **Llyr Gruffydd:** Wel, jest i godi lan ar y pwynt hwnnw, oherwydd mae yna gyfnod o newid hyd yn oed yn fwy sylweddol, byddwn i'n ei ddweud, o'n blaenau ni nawr, gyda newidiadau i'r cwricwlwm ac yn y blaen. A ydych chi'n poeni bod yna berig gwirioneddol y bydd hynny'n cael effaith ar ansawdd, oherwydd bydd addysgwyr yn canolbwyntio ar y newidiadau strwythurol yna yn hytrach, efallai, na chanolbwyntio yn llawn ar y dosbarth?

Llyr Gruffydd: Just to pick up on that point, because there is a period of even more significant change in front of us, I would say, now, with changes to the curriculum. Are you concerned that there is a real danger that that will have an impact on quality, because teachers will be concentrating on those structural changes rather than concentrating on the classroom?

[53] **Mr Rowlands:** Wel, rydw i'n meddwl, fel yr oeddwn i'n esbonio nawr, bod y system wedi dangos bod e yn medru ymdopi â llawer iawn o newidiadau, gan gadw safonau, a mynd i'r afael â'r holl newidiadau yma. Rydw i'n credu ei bod yn bwysig—a dyma un o'r negeseuon yn yr adroddiad blynyddol eleni—tra bod yna gymaint o newid—. Mewn gwirionedd, mae rhywun yn derbyn bod yn rhaid newid yr holl bethau yma. Nid ydw i'n meddwl bod neb yn meddwl nad oedd angen yr holl newidiadau yma, nac ychwaith y

Mr Rowlands: Well, as I was just explaining, I do think that the system has demonstrated that it can cope with a great deal of change, whilst maintaining standards and tackling all of these changes that you mentioned. I do think it is important—and this is one of the messages of our annual report this year—that whilst there is so much change—. If truth be told, one accepts that these changes are necessary. I don't think anybody believes that these changes aren't necessary, or the changes that are in

newidiadau sy'n cael eu bwriadu gan y cwricwlwm ac yn y blaen. Mae pawb yn derbyn bod y rheini angen cael eu gwneud, ond beth sy'n bwysig, rydw i'n teimlo, yw bod yn rhaid i'r arweinyddiaeth o fewn ein sefydliadau ni ganolbwyntio ar y peth mwyaf pwysig, sef gwella ansawdd profiadau dysgu ein pobl ifanc ni. Trwy ffocysu ar ansawdd y dysgu a'r addysgu, rŷch chi'n mynd i wneud y gorau ar gyfer ein pobl ifanc ni, ond rŷch chi hefyd yn mynd i wneud y gorau o'r blaengareddau newydd yma. Achos bwriad pob un o'r rheini, yn y bôn, yw gwella ansawdd y dysgu a'r addysgu. Dyna fwriad y cwricwlwm newydd, er enghraifft. Dyna beth yw craidd bwriad y newidiadau yn y cwricwlwm: gwella addysgu a dysgu. Felly, drwy ganolbwyntio ar hynny, rydw i'n meddwl y bydd yn fwy tebygol y bydd yn blaengareddau yma yn llwyddo, a hefyd bod safonau yn gwella.

the pipeline in terms of the curriculum. Everyone accepts that those are necessary, but what is important, in my view, is that the leadership within our institutions must focus on the most important thing, namely improving the quality of learning experiences for our young people. By focusing on the quality of the teaching and learning, then you will actually provide the best possible service for our young people, but you will also make the best of these new initiatives and developments. Because the intention of all of those, essentially, is to enhance the quality of teaching and learning. That is the aim of the new curriculum, for example. That is the core effort there: to improve teaching and learning. By focusing on that, then I do think it's more likely that these new initiatives will succeed and that standards will improve.

[54] **Lynne Neagle:** Thank you. The next set of questions is from Julie.

[55] **Julie Morgan:** Thank you very much, Chair. I wanted to ask you about the variation in standards in secondary and primary schools, because obviously there is a difference in terms of the—. We've got the figures here, and there do seem to be many more primary schools, for example, that are classed as good, compared to secondary schools, and there's more polarisation. So, could you tell us a bit about that, why this is happening?

[56] **Mr Rowlands:** Yes, I'm grateful to you for raising that issue, because I think it's good that we have this debate. I don't claim that I know the answer to it, necessarily, but I think most people would recognise that there is quite a substantial difference between what happens in a primary school and a secondary school. Clearly, as children grow and develop, they also present different challenges to teachers. I think that's part of it. But the structure of

primary and secondary schools is clearly very, very different. In a primary school, you have, basically, one teacher who looks after a child all year; in a secondary school, you have a number of teachers for each child. I think a possible advantage of the primary system, then, is that the teacher can get to know the individual child very, very well, and understand their needs and address the needs of the child in a holistic way, and meet their needs on a sort of personal level. Getting that kind of level of consistency is much more challenging in a secondary school. I mean, what's interesting about secondary schools is that, clearly, you will, at some point, have to have differentiation of teaching, because the challenges of teaching qualifications at GCSE level require specialist teaching. I think most people would agree with that.

[57] But what you've got with secondary schools is that they're much bigger organisations, they're much more complex organisations. Because of that, they're more challenging to lead. The leadership challenge is greater. The effect of that, I think, is that you have this greater variability. In fact, there's more excellence in secondary than there is in primary. I think you've got a kind of critical mass in secondary; when you've got really effective leadership, it can lead to this excellence. On the other hand, you've got more potential, if you like, for things to go wrong.

10:00

[58] I think the challenge of dealing with external examinations and the possible unintended consequences of an examination system with performance indicators that might push people down the wrong way is also part of the picture. So, it's quite a complex picture. It's got, I think, social elements as children get older, but there are structural differences as well. What, I think, we're finding very interesting is that there is an increase in all-age schools, currently. We've got, I think, 10 now and I think, shortly, there'll be about 15. We're starting to inspect them as a sector, and, for the first time ever in this year's annual report, we had a section on it. What's coming out of those inspections so far is the same sort of picture, really, that there are considerable strengths in the primary provision in those all-age schools, and more weaknesses in the secondary.

[59] **Julie Morgan:** So, the fact that the children stay in the same school, with, presumably, some of the same teachers at least in the same building, doesn't help in any way in the all-age schools, in this gap?

[60] **Mr Rowlands:** One would expect it to help.

[61] **Julie Morgan:** Yes, you would expect it to help.

[62] **Mr Rowlands:** You would expect it to help, and one would hope that it would help in the long term, but these all-age schools are fairly new organisations. Presumably, they haven't got to grips with this issue yet.

[63] **Julie Morgan:** Yes. So, really, we don't know what to do in the secondary schools to improve the situation.

[64] **Mr Rowlands:** Well, clearly, there are issues that they need to think about. There are lessons that can be learnt from primary. I don't think you can simply take the primary model and impose it on secondary, but I think you can learn the lesson that a consistent, coherent approach to teaching and learning is likely to be—. And there's other evidence for saying that that is what's working in effective secondary schools. So, I think that could be the lesson: that you need the consistency and coherence.

[65] **Julie Morgan:** In a secondary school.

[66] **Ms Morgan:** I think, certainly in secondary, the focus needs to be on the role of the leadership in bringing about improvements in teaching and learning. As Meilyr said earlier, we welcome the establishment of the national academy for educational leadership, and the priorities around serving headteachers and future headteachers are really welcomed. We've discussed it for a number of years in Estyn—the need to strengthen leadership and strengthen professional development around leadership—and, clearly, in secondary, we need to meet the needs of that sector.

[67] **Julie Morgan:** Right. The other question I wanted to ask was: I think we've mentioned that a lot of the primary schools are good—what do they need to do to become excellent?

[68] **Mr Rowlands:** That is a good question. I think it is the obvious things, really. Standards need to improve in terms of even better literacy, numeracy and digital skills. And I think, in terms of the provision that distinguishes these excellent primary schools, it is a kind of vibrant, exciting learning experience. That is what strikes you when you go to these particular schools. So, I think it's the role of the leadership, again, to encourage and help staff, through better staff development, to unlock their potential to produce really

exciting, innovative, creative learning experiences.

[69] **Julie Morgan:** Thank you. And a final question: there has been an increase in the number of schools requiring monitoring—is this a good sign or a bad sign?

[70] **Mr Rowlands:** It's a bad sign, but I don't think it's particularly significant. We're concerned about the number of schools that go into special measures or 'significant improvement', or those that need Estyn monitoring. But there's no particular pattern of increase in those. One of the things that we have said in our regional consortia inspections is that there does need to be a kind of safety net for schools that underperform, and I think the regional consortia need to target their resources particularly to support those schools that need it.

[71] **Ms Morgan:** I think we see that most primary schools that go into a statutory category tend to improve and make sufficient progress in around 18 months. But Meilyr is right—we don't want a situation where we wait for an inspection to take place to put a school into follow-up, for then the support to be given by the middle tier. We need that support to be almost pre-emptive, so that it prevents schools going into that situation where standards are decreasing.

[72] **Mr Brown:** This is an area where the regional consortia are getting stronger in terms of what they're doing. For example, the challenge adviser is a key person to work with a school. And one of the developments over the past 18 months to two years has been brokering school-to-school support. So, where a school is excellent and is performing in terms of its culture, in terms of its leadership and in terms of what it's doing in teaching, the challenge adviser can then look at schools that, perhaps, are struggling in that area, and try to match them up, so that they can learn from each other.

[73] I think one of the other issues, which Meilyr raised earlier, is the analysis of data in the regional consortia inspections. And this is one of the recommendations that we will be following up in the autumn with the four consortia—how well they analyse data, not just for different groups of learners, the vulnerable learners, the more able and talented, but also how they target their support to meet the specific needs of schools. If you go back to the beginning of the consortia, when they first came on stream, some of them were offering a sort of one-stop shop, a sort of blanket cover—the same diet to all schools. They're getting more sophisticated now

in targeting resources where they're most needed.

[74] **Julie Morgan:** Thank you very much.

[75] **Lynne Neagle:** Llyr.

[76] **Llyr Gruffydd:** Rwy jest eisiau gwneud yn siŵr fy mod i'n deall hwn yn iawn, oherwydd mae yna gynnydd sylweddol wedi bod yn nifer yr ysgolion cynradd sydd yn cael monitro dilynol. Mae'r ganran i fyny o 38 y cant yn 2010–11 i 63 y cant yn 2015–16. Nawr, mae yna un o ddau beth yn gyfrifol am hynny, onid oes? Naillai bod y safonau wedi dirywio, sy'n golygu ein bod ni'n gweld cynnydd sylweddol, neu eich bod chi'n mynnu safon uwch, neu'n cymryd rhyw ddehongliad gwahanol o'r sefyllfa. Rwy jest eisiau deall—. Mae honno'n naid sylweddol mewn cyfnod cymharol fyr.

Llyr Gruffydd: I just want to make sure that I understand this correctly, because there has been a significant increase in the number of primary schools that have follow-up monitoring. The percentage is up from 38 per cent in 2010–11 to 63 per cent in 2015–16. Now, one of two things is responsible for that. Either the standards have deteriorated, which means that we're seeing a significant increase, or you are asking for a higher standard, or taking a different view on it. I just want to understand—. That is a significant jump in a relatively short period of time.

[77] **Mr Rowlands:** Mae nifer yr ysgolion yn gymharol fach. Fe fyddai'n rhaid i mi fynd yn ôl i edrych ar y data, ond nid dyna'r argraff rwy'n ei chael gan fy arolygwyr—bod yna newid sylweddol. Jest digwyddiad yw e am y nifer o ysgolion penodol rydym wedi'u harolygu. Nid wyf yn meddwl bod gofid gyda ni fod hynny yn rhywbeth sy'n mynd i barhau. Mae'r rhifau hynny'n mynd i fyny ac i lawr o flwyddyn i flwyddyn.

Mr Rowlands: The number of schools is relatively small. I would have to return to look at the data, but that's not the impression I get from my inspectors—that there has been a significant change. It's just an issue in the specific number of schools that we have inspected. I don't think that there is a huge concern for us that that is something that will continue. Those numbers do increase and decrease year on year.

[78] **Llyr Gruffydd:** Maen nhw wedi mynd i fyny yn sylweddol, onid ydyn nhw? Rwy'n deall beth rydych chi'n ei ddweud, ac fe esbonioch chi'n

Llyr Gruffydd: They have gone up significantly, haven't they? I understand what you're saying, and you explained earlier that perhaps

gynharach efallai bod perygl cymharu blwyddyn a blwyddyn, ond rwy'n meddwl, pan fydd hi'n dod i gael y gorolwg saith mlynedd y flwyddyn nesaf, fod hwn yn sicr yn rhywbeth y mae angen ffigurau eithaf cyhyrog o'i gwmpas, i ni gael deall yn iawn a yw hynny'n adlewyrchiad o ddirywiad sylweddol neu rywbeth arall.

[79] **Mr Rowlands:** Yn sicr, fe wna i edrych ar hynny eto.

Mr Rowlands: Certainly, I will return to that issue.

[80] **Llyr Gruffydd:** Diolch.

Llyr Gruffydd: Thank you.

[81] **Lynne Neagle:** Thank you. We're going to go on now to issues specifically around teaching. I've got Oscar first.

[82] **Mohammad Asghar:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you very much, Meilyr. Some 2,000 years ago, there was a Greek saying that knowledge is a virtue and virtue can be taught so knowledge can be taught. It was right then and it's right now. Teachers are very important to produce the best people and the best nation for the future. So, teaching is a very sacred profession. Estyn argues—it's their argument—that high-performing schools always work closely with clusters and family groups of other schools, but low-performing schools depend on the pupils' background—that is the argument being used in the report. Do you have any examples as to where this has been the case and, if so, what practice is in place to ensure that this is not a regular occurrence in Wales?

[83] **Mr Rowlands:** Sorry, can you repeat that again?

[84] **Mohammad Asghar:** Yes. Do you have any examples? You know, the high-performing schools work closely and work in clusters. High-performing schools, they work closely. But, where the performance is not made better, it's probably because of the pupils' and the students' background. That's what it is. The pupils' background is used as an excuse for poor performance. That is in black and white here. So, my question is: do you have any examples of where this has been the case and, if so, what practice is in place to ensure that this is not a regular occurrence?

[85] **Mr Rowlands:** I can't think of any schools off the top of my head, but I think you're right in saying that it is possible for schools to have—if I've understood you correctly—good outcomes because of the pupils' background, even though the teaching might not be as good. Certainly, I can go back and find examples where we've given a high grade for outcomes and for standards but the teaching or even the leadership hasn't got as high a grade. If you look at our reports, that does happen. Sometimes, the other way around happens. So, the grades aren't uniformly all good or all adequate or something. So, it is possible. In those cases, the report would say that the teaching hasn't been as good as you'd expect.

[86] **Mohammad Asghar:** I'll put it on a different angle now. Are schools encouraged to develop collaboration and supportive relationships with other schools? Who has the overall responsibility for driving collaboration in our schools?

[87] **Mr Rowlands:** Schools themselves, of course, sometimes decide to collaborate with other schools—they can have self-working—but also, clearly, there have been national initiatives like Schools Challenge Cymru, which helped schools to work in partnerships. There's been encouragement to work in families of schools from the data developments from the all-Wales data set. But I suppose the main driver for working in networks has been the regional consortia and local authorities. They've been encouraging schools to work in various networks. I'm sure Simon can say more about this, but our impression overall is that there are different systems in the different areas of Wales for this collaboration, and I think what's missing is detailed evaluation of those mechanisms to see which ones are the most effective and the ones that have the impact you're describing.

10:15

[88] **Mr Brown:** I can give you an example. To pick up on Meilyr's point, EAS in south-east Wales had a programme, or they have a programme, of looking at schools that have excellent practice in mathematics teaching, and then setting up hubs—local hubs—where that school's leading teacher of mathematics shares his practice with other neighbouring schools. And that's the example of each consortium taking the proactive approach to focussing on a particular issue. I think the other comment that is in the report—and we picked up on it in our regional consortia inspections—is that, where consortia have set up school-to-school brokering and have matched schools up, there's been a tendency for them to set them up to do the sort of

matchmaking but then to leave them alone. Now, in some cases it's flourished. In some cases—because, as Meilyr said, some schools are quite into that sort of culture—those school-to-school groups have worked very effectively. But in one or two areas, the energy has gone out of it and that has declined, and the consortia haven't been proactive in putting energy back into that relationship. So, it's a little bit variable at the moment.

[89] **Mohammad Asghar:** There's another area that I would like to ask about: the teachers and the standards, which I am concerned about. A number of years ago, they probably wouldn't have had a permanent position, but now they are in our schools teaching. How often is this the case in schools in Wales? What is being done to prevent this from happening here in Wales in terms of the standard of the teachers?

[90] **Mr Rowlands:** The what, sorry?

[91] **Mohammad Asghar:** Teachers who, a number of years ago, would not have been considered for a permanent position in Welsh-medium schools here in Wales. Now, they're teaching in certain schools. So, basically, how can you stop it from happening here in schools?

[92] **Mr Rowlands:** Well, I'm not aware of those cases you're referring to. There are quite rigorous systems for trainee teachers to become newly qualified teachers, and for induction, and after that there are competency procedures. I'm not aware that those processes are less effective now than they were in the past.

[93] **Mohammad Asghar:** I'm reading the report. The headteachers are going to the classes and teaching because the standard of the teachers—the calibre is not there.

[94] **Mr Rowlands:** Well, it's quite right to say that the most important element of provision is the teaching in the classroom. Our evidence is very clear about that, but international research supports that and I think that's why we've focused on the improvement of teaching and learning in the classroom as the main message of the annual report this year. It is all about—. In the end, if children's outcomes are going to improve, then it's that relationship and that teaching and learning that happens between the pupil and the teacher that has to improve, and I think professional development and a culture of professional development in schools is clearly what makes a difference. In an excellent school, they recruit teachers and

those teachers become excellent because they're in that culture where there's sharing of good practice. They get the best out of teachers. And you're quite right that the leaders have a key role in that process in those better schools. Not only have they created this culture, but they really understand the strengths and weaknesses of the teaching and learning in all the classes, because, like you say, they've visited classes and they know what's going on, and that's an essential role of leaders in our best schools.

[95] **Lynne Neagle:** Okay, thank you. Julie, then Hefin. If I can appeal for brief questions and brief answers as far as possible, please.

[96] **Hefin David:** [*Inaudible.*]

[97] **Lynne Neagle:** I know that. No, it wasn't aimed at you. Julie.

[98] **Julie Morgan:** I was going to go on to vulnerable learners.

[99] **Lynne Neagle:** No; we're staying with teaching at the moment.

[100] **Julie Morgan:** Okay, then. That's fine. Let Hefin do it, then.

[101] **Lynne Neagle:** Okay. Hefin.

[102] **Hefin David:** We're currently undertaking an inquiry into teacher's professional learning and education, as I'm sure you're aware, and a significant part of your report is given over to that—the first section, in fact. In that, you've said,

[103] 'Although many schools are drawing more on research to identify strategies for improvement, the implementation of these strategies is superficial when leaders do not ensure that practitioners fully understand the thinking behind them.'

[104] Could you elaborate on that and the kind of strategies you're referring to and how they could be better understood?

[105] **Mr Rowlands:** It's true of all kinds of strategies. I mean, we've done a lot of work on, for example, the foundation phase, and one of the clear messages we've learned from that was that where the teachers and the leaders understand the philosophy, if you like, of what the foundation phase is all about, where they've spent time in discussing it and understanding

what it's about, then it's much more effective. It's that sort of thing. One of the things I've said in the annual report is about this bit of a quick fix of having a checklist for teaching, and that's an example. Some professor somewhere has made up that list, and there's probably fantastic research behind it, and if you go on a course that explains to you how that works, then that checklist might be useful, but if someone just photocopies it and gives it to a teacher without explaining how it works and what the thinking behind it is, then that has certainly got unintended consequences, and it just becomes a mechanistic—you know, 'Someone's told me to do this, so I'm going to have to do it'.

[106] **Hefin David:** And with that in mind, to what extent would that be embedded in initial teacher education? Because that's where it should start.

[107] **Mr Rowlands:** Yes, indeed. Certainly, it's important in the initial teacher training that trainee teachers have a critical understanding of their work and that they don't just accept things, you know, like those examples—

[108] **Hefin David:** But do they? That's the question.

[109] **Mr Rowlands:** Well, not enough, no, because we've been very critical of initial teacher training in Wales, and there's been a series of reports by Tabberer and Furlong that indicates that that isn't good enough at the moment, hence all the new accreditation and new systems for ITET.

[110] **Hefin David:** Perhaps we can explore these things at more length at a later evidence session.

[111] **Mr Rowlands:** Absolutely. Yes, we can definitely do that.

[112] **Lynne Neagle:** Thank you. Julie.

[113] **Julie Morgan:** Thank you very much. I was going to go on to provision for vulnerable learners, and in particular to ask you about the pupil referral units and the evidence there seems to be that they don't really provide what they should. Could you comment on that?

[114] **Mr Rowlands:** You're right. We've been critical over the years in annual reports and we've written specific reports on pupil referral units. There are lots of reasons why they're not doing as well as, for example, special schools. I think it's only fair to say that we've inspected two PRUs this year,

and both were good, so that is good news, and these were PRUs that actually were struggling in the past and have taken on board some of our recommendations and have actually made quite good progress. So, there is some good practice in the sector.

[115] **Mr Rowlands:** I think, as you know, the Welsh Government has established a task and finish group to look at education otherwise than at school and pupil referral units specifically. My predecessor, Ann Keane, is chairing that and I understand that they will be publishing their findings shortly. But one of the problems, certainly for pupil referral units, is the instability of the sector itself. I think we calculated that a quarter of the PRUs we inspected in this cycle no longer exist. They disappear, they amalgamate with other ones, they disamalgamate—if that's the right phrase—and new ones open and close. I think there is an issue also about the nature of their governance and leadership. We keep saying that leadership is the most important thing in schools, but these are not schools—they don't have a head. The governance is quite complex and I don't think that helps either.

[116] **Julie Morgan:** Is there any evidence of the fact that children's PRUs may not get access to science facilities, for example, because of the nature of where they're placed, as other pupils would? Is there evidence to show that?

[117] **Mr Rowlands:** Absolutely. That is a common fault. As you know, pupil referral units are not considered to be schools because they don't intend for the pupils to stay there very long. The idea is that they are a rotating circular door—they go in and they come out when they're ready to be reintegrated into mainstream schools. But that doesn't always happen and they are often there for a long time and, of course, they don't have the facilities for, certainly things like science, in the same way as a secondary school would have and it's very common for the curriculum to be impoverished.

[118] **Julie Morgan:** So, you think there is an impetus now to improve things with setting up the group to look at this.

[119] **Mr Rowlands:** Well, there's been this task and finish group and I look forward to seeing what they have to say about it.

[120] **Julie Morgan:** Because this has been a long-established problem.

[121] **Mr Rowlands:** Absolutely.

[122] **Julie Morgan:** And it really needs to be tackled.

[123] **Mr Rowlands:** Absolutely, and I think a lot of this is to do with leadership and leadership is complex in this case because of the governance. The governance means that the continuity and coherence we were talking about is a key element of good leadership and it's not possible when these units are popping up and down. I think there's no doubt that the people in charge of these PRUs need more support and training to help them to be better leaders. Those are the sorts of things I hope this task and finish group would come up with.

[124] **Julie Morgan:** Is the fact that there is continuity and stability in special schools—is that why the performance is different?

[125] **Mr Rowlands:** Yes, I think so. And the other factor that's very clear, I think, in special schools is the very good networking between special schools. We were a little bit critical of special schools this year. Many, many of the special schools have been excellent—over 90 per cent, I think, have been good or excellent over the cycle, but the slight criticism we made of the special school sector—. I met some heads recently and they said that, immediately, they'd been talking about this and what they can do to improve. So, they've got a very proactive approach of networking together and working to improve. I think something like that will help PRUs as well.

[126] **Lynne Neagle:** Thank you. We're going to move on now to talk about local authorities and regional consortia. Hefin.

[127] **Hefin David:** How does the Cabinet Secretary's White Paper on local government reform give you a clear idea of how you may approach the inspection of local authorities in future?

[128] **Mr Rowlands:** The White Paper is interesting in that it's suggesting an approach to services in general that's not dissimilar to what we've seen in education with regional consortia, but Simon can answer this question.

10:30

[129] **Mr Brown:** Yes. Our plans—this is putting it into context—for inspecting what we're going to call 'local government education service inspections' going forward—. We're calling it that because we're thinking of

looking at the statutory services that local authorities have to deliver, and also the role that each consortium will play in delivering school improvement services, and then the leadership and governance of both. So, that's the model we're going to look towards. We're out for consultation at the moment; we went out for consultation on 9 February and the consultation closes on 2 March. That's very much an open consultation. It's gone out to the public, it's gone out to all local authorities and chief execs, and we'll look forward to seeing what they come back with in terms of their thoughts about how we inspect local government going forward.

[130] Then in the remainder of this spring and the summer, we'll be drafting an inspection framework. In late summer, we'll publish a draft framework and go out to further consultation to see what the responses are of the sector and, again, of the public to that model. We'll then pilot it in late autumn this year, 2017, and in spring 2018 we'll do pilot inspections. In the summer—this is standard practice when we develop an inspection model—we'll look at the pilot, we'll look at lessons learnt, we'll make changes to the framework and then at the end of the summer, we'll publish the final inspection framework. We'll also be doing a training programme for our inspectors, and we also intend to use peer inspectors, which we used in previous cycles. These are people from the sector—these are directors of education, in some cases chief executives, and assistant directors, who we train up and then they join our inspection teams. And then the cycle will go live in September 2018.

[131] One of the issues we have is that we've got to factor in that this cycle will last for six to seven years, and as we've already heard, there's been a lot of structural change, because the White Paper on reforming local government will start to impact, I suspect, on possibly voluntary mergers and different structural changes will happen. So, we need to develop a framework that's futureproofed and that can flex to accommodate those sorts of changes. So, from that point of view, this is probably the most challenging local government framework we've had to develop since about 2001, because we've got to accommodate the changes in governance and structure.

[132] **Hefin David:** Okay, a framework that's both flexible and sturdy is what you're trying to create.

[133] **Mr Brown:** We hope so, yes. We hope that it's as robust a framework that we had in 2010 to 2016.

[134] **Hefin David:** Did the White Paper help you develop your ideas a lot, a little or not at all?

[135] **Mr Brown:** At the moment, we're basically assimilating the implications of the White Paper back in-house. Estyn will be responding formally to Mark Drakeford's consultation. So, at the moment, we're just getting to grips with the possible implications are for the model suggested.

[136] **Hefin David:** Okay. And given that there is this slight time lag between the last inspections and the next inspections as a result of the issues you've just raised, what is your feeling now about management and leadership from a local authority and regional consortia point of view?

[137] **Mr Brown:** Well, in terms of the lag, we inspected the regional consortia from February 2016 to June 2016.

[138] **Hefin David:** Sorry, I was referring to local authority.

[139] **Mr Brown:** So, we've got intelligence about what they're doing. In terms of the local authorities, we have a system of local authority link inspectors, and they visit the authorities on a termly basis. For example, from September to December in 2016, we visited all 22 authorities at least once. Some authorities we visited twice, the consortia we visited multiple times. So, we've got a finger on the pulse on what they're doing. At the moment, the feeling we have is that they are also thinking ahead to what the implications are of the White Paper. And the one thing that we've raised—we'll be talking to ADEW in about two weeks' time about this—is the concerns that they don't take their eye off the ball of service delivery and get too distracted in terms of putting their energies into what might be the implications of structural change.

[140] **Hefin David:** Who did you say you were speaking to?

[141] **Mr Brown:** ADEW—the Association of Directors of Education in Wales; we're meeting with them. We meet with them quite regularly, (a) to give feedback to them, but also to consult with them about future changes.

[142] **Hefin David:** So, would it be fair to say that the kaleidoscope was in flux, to coin a phrase, and you're gathering what data you can at this point in time, but you expect a more settled picture in September 2018?

[143] **Mr Brown:** I expect things to settle down. The other factor to put in—and we've mainly mentioned change—is, since 2013, half of the directors have changed. Out of the 22 authorities, half have changed. In terms of the consortia, none of the managing directors of the regional consortia were in post when the consortia were first set up, and recently, two of the directors, the managing directors, have moved on. So, there's a constant flux in terms of the leadership roles within those authorities. And one of the conversations we have with them when we do the monitoring visits is: 'What are you doing in terms of continuity of service, despite the fact you've got changes in leadership?'

[144] **Hefin David:** Okay. So, a period of stability and calm would be welcome.

[145] **Mr Brown:** Yes.

[146] **Lynne Neagle:** Okay. Can I just ask, in terms of these link inspectors, obviously it's encouraging that they are keeping a close eye on what's happening in local authorities, but what is the mechanism, then, for them to raise concerns, because, presumably, nobody can be put into a category of monitoring at the moment while the system is in flux? Is that correct?

[147] **Mr Brown:** The way we—. We have regular meetings with Welsh Government—colleagues in Welsh Government—and we try to have half-yearly or termly meetings, and we discuss authorities of concern, particularly those authorities where you have posts that are vacant at the moment. Powys is one example, where there's a chief schools officer, a director post, which has yet to be filled. And it's those areas, where an authority has got vacant posts in senior layers, that rings an alarm bell, and we're having the conversation, 'What are you doing to make sure that service continuity carries on?'

[148] **Lynne Neagle:** But would it be fair to say, then, there's less rigour in the system at the moment because we are in this situation of being in between systems?

[149] **Mr Brown:** I don't know whether I'd say less rigour, but we've taken a different approach. Because we stopped inspections in 2013, the core inspections, we went into a large programme of follow-up and, as you'll be aware, as a result of that last cycle of inspections, 15 of the 22 local authorities went into some sort of follow-up category. Subsequently, some

have started—they came out of follow-up, mainly because we had assurances, when we went in to re-inspect, they'd got appropriate senior personnel in post, and that gave us a good indication they were going to get a grip and move forward. But what has happened, and this is why it is quite a volatile sector, is in some of those authorities, those people who were in post, who gave us good messages, moved on to other posts and those posts became vacant, which then meant that you had instability introduced back into the system.

[150] We have also tried an innovative approach this year, which is something called the improvement conference, and the idea of the improvement conference is to get all the key players around the table—elected members and senior officers in the authority, and senior staff in the regional consortia—to have an honest discussion about what the issues are in that authority, to put all their cards on the table and then develop actions, an action plan of how they will work together to overcome barriers—who will do what, who will take responsibility, and costed actions for that. We've piloted this approach. We piloted it in Pembrokeshire, back on 11 January. We recently had a meeting in Powys, on 8 February, and we're going to have one in Wrexham, which is planned for July, after the local authority elections. And those first two pilot inspections, I think, were quite positive. We had feedback from one of the chief execs, who actually commented it was the first time that all those players had got around the table and actually put their cards on the table as to what was going on in that authority. The outcome of it is a letter to the chief executive, which will talk about or capture the decisions that were made in the meeting and the actions that are planned, and then we'll revisit in 12 months' time. So, we've said to those, or we'll be saying to those three authorities, 'You've got 12 months to implement those actions.' When they reconvene the conference, if the result is slow progress or people have failed to carry out the actions, we'll then either look at doing some further review work in that authority—monitoring work—or possibly by then, depending on what the situation is like, we could look at doing an inspection of those authorities, bringing them forward for an inspection, because the framework will more or less be in place at that point.

[151] **Lynne Neagle:** Okay, thank you. Hefin.

[152] **Hefin David:** Just with that in mind, have you seen an improvement in the role of education scrutiny amongst elected members in local authorities?

[153] **Mr Brown:** Yes. I think one of the comments—and this has been a perennial issue that I've raised in this committee over a number of years—is that education scrutiny wasn't that robust, and wasn't that challenging. I think we have seen a significant change in that. One of the roles that local authority link inspectors have done, they don't just talk to senior officers in the authority, they also visit a sample of schools to talk to them, but they also visit education committee and scrutiny committee meetings. Certainly, the reports I've seen from recent visits to scrutiny in a number of authorities show that scrutiny is getting much sharper. I think it's because we worked quite closely with Wales Audit Office and with—it was a project that was run by Cardiff county council last year for educating scrutiny members and scrutiny chairs in how to (a) look at data in a more analytical way, to ask the right questions of the data, and also to bring a wider range of officers from the local authority to challenge them about the quality of service they're providing. That, I think, is a positive picture. Scrutiny does seem to be getting much sharper.

[154] **Lynne Neagle:** Okay, thank you. Right. Our final set of questions is on education improvement generally. Oscar.

[155] **Mohammad Asghar:** Thank you, Chair. Thank you very much for coming, chief inspector. What my question is: you know, the PISA results and GCSE results, how you measure the assessment of development for the Welsh education system.

[156] **Mr Rowlands:** Traditionally, we have been able to compare Wales with Northern Ireland and England in terms of GCSE results. Even in the old days, that was quite complicated, actually, because, even though the GCSE itself was similar across those countries, practices were different. So, indicators measured how many GCSEs or equivalent were passed, and different countries entered pupils in a different way in terms of early entry, but also for the actual qualifications. The non-GCSE, but equivalent-to-GCSE, examinations in England, for example, were much greater than in Wales. They had that bigger problem, and it looked as if the GCSE or equivalent was higher—and was higher—in England than in Wales, but that probably was due to those equivalent qualifications that Wales didn't have as many of. Therefore, I think England has decided not to include those in the same way—in a different way than Wales has. So, the systems are becoming more and more different, and comparisons—. So, the statisticians say that we cannot really easily compare Wales and England and Northern Ireland anymore in terms of GCSE results.

[157] **Mohammad Asghar:** Thank you very much. The other thing, which I'll just, Chair, ask: what are you doing to monitor and evaluate the educational outcomes of ethnic minority children learners across Wales? To what extent is there evidence to show that these children are reaching their potential or underachieving in education?

[158] **Mr Rowlands:** Well, we have written reports on this, and one of the main things that our inspectors look at under the first bit of the common inspection framework—that's the current framework, but it will continue in the next framework that we're starting in September—is looking at differences between different groups of pupils, so we analyse that closely at an institution-by-institution level, and, if there's underperformance, we mention it. On a national level, of course, there are national statistics, and we've been talking about free school meals and we've been talking about differences between boys and girls, and we've talked, in fact, in this committee about differences between ethnic minorities. We were here talking about Gypsy and Traveller children in particular, who are the lowest-performing ethnic minority group, and I note that there's been a report on black ethnic groups recently, because they are the other ethnic group that underperforms significantly.

10:45

[159] **Lynne Neagle:** Okay, and, in terms of the gap between free school meal pupils and other pupils, is there anything more you think the Welsh Government should be doing to reduce that gap?

[160] **Mr Rowlands:** We discussed earlier about, I think, the importance of involving the community and parents, and I think there's quite a lot of evidence about the importance of that, and I think Welsh Government are encouraging that sort of approach. How coherent and how high a priority that is—I think, probably, we could do a little bit more on that. Before we finish, I'd like to get back to Llyr, and just double check on the data he was referring to that I couldn't quite find in my report.

[161] **Llyr Gruffydd:** Mae'r canran o ysgolion sydd wedi cael monitro dilynol yn dilyn arolwg wedi cynyddu. Roedd y ganran yn 38 y cant yn 2010–11, ac mae wedi mynd lan i 63

Llyr Gruffydd: The percentage of schools that have had follow-up monitoring after their inspections has increased. The percentage was 38 per cent in 2010–11, and has gone to

y cant yn 2015–16. Nid wyf yn siŵr 63 per cent in 2015–16. I’m not sure
yn union ble mae hynny yn yr exactly where it is in the report.
adroddiad.

[162] **Mr Rowlands:** O, nid wyt ti’n **Mr Rowlands:** Oh, you don’t know
gwybod ble mae e, nag wyt? where it is, do you?

[163] **Lynne Neagle:** It’s figure 3.22, and it’s on page 146.

[164] **Llyr Gruffydd:** I’m glad the Chair’s on the ball this morning.

[165] **Lynne Neagle:** Well, Michael’s on the ball.

[166] **Mr Rowlands:** Three point—.

[167] **Lynne Neagle:** Figure 3.22, page 146. But, if you want to let us have a
note on that, that would be fine.

[168] **Mr Rowlands:** It looks as if those have actually gone down, so I’m not
quite sure—.

[169] **Ms Morgan:** The total number in follow-up has decreased between
2014 and 2015, but the total number of inspections is less.

[170] **Llyr Gruffydd:** Ond mae’r nifer **Llyr Gruffydd:** But the number in
sy’n cael eu monitro, os edrychwch monitoring, if you look at the
chi rhwng monitro Estyn a monitro monitoring of Estyn and local
awdurdodau lleol, yn 2010–11 roedd authority monitoring, in 2010–11
y ddau gyda’i gilydd yn 91, ac mae’n both together were 91, and they’re
nhw’n 122. now 122.

[171] **Mr Rowlands:** We’ll have to get back to you on that. I don’t think—.
That’s not my interpretation of the figures.

[172] **Llyr Gruffydd:** Okay.

[173] **Lynne Neagle:** Thank you. Darren.

[174] **Darren Millar:** Just a couple of points, if I may, Chair. In relation to the
gap between free school meal and non-free school meal learners, part of
that, according to your report—and indeed the PISA results bear this out—is

that the children who ought to be performing better appear not to be doing as well as they ought to be, those high-flying kids. Can you comment on why you think that might be the case?

[175] **Mr Rowlands:** Yes. We discussed this before you came in, actually. So, we discussed the more able issue, and we talked about, for example, the unintended consequences of some performance indicators, that sort of thing. I don't think there has been enough attention given to that group of young people.

[176] **Darren Millar:** And in terms, then, of the resources that are allocated to children, obviously with the pupil premium, which has been increased recently, focused very much on children from deprived backgrounds, do you think that other children may be losing out as a result of less of a focus of resources on those children that perhaps could really be unleashed to their potential if there was a little bit of resource allocated to them?

[177] **Mr Rowlands:** Well, those groups aren't mutually exclusive.

[178] **Darren Millar:** I appreciate that.

[179] **Mr Rowlands:** Certainly, one of the points that we do make is that, when we're talking about more able pupils, particularly those from a deprived background—. Some of those more able children from another background might get the sort of support they need outside of school, but certainly those children from a deprived background do need—. And that has been a constant theme in all our reports on the pupil deprivation grant, that schools should not confuse the deprived children with less able children, and there was certainly, towards the beginning of using the deprivation grant, just using it in that way.

[180] **Darren Millar:** You're satisfied that that message is getting through to schools in terms of the enrichment that that grant can bring to all learners, rather than—

[181] **Mr Rowlands:** I think it's certainly much better now, but I think, generally, more able children aren't getting enough attention.

[182] **Ms Morgan:** I think we would agree that more needs to be done to ensure that more able pupils, including the more able from disadvantaged backgrounds, are actually stretched to reach their full potential. There's been

too much focus on that C/D border line that Meilyr mentioned earlier, and some gaming, early entry, that hasn't helped then to stretch the more able. I think this has stifled the progress of more able learners. So, there's more work that needs to be done.

[183] **Darren Millar:** Okay. Thank you. Just the other aspect I wanted to touch on, which hasn't been touched on: the further education colleges. Obviously, you inspected two FE colleges this year. The performance of—. I appreciate it's a small sample of the colleges Wales-wide, but their leadership, in particular, seems to be excellent, the provision seems to be excellent, and they generally seem to have more good and excellent features than our schools. Is there any way that you think that the leadership that's in those colleges could be something—is a resource that might be more widely applied across the education sector more generally?

[184] **Mr Rowlands:** I think that's a very helpful suggestion, actually. We were talking earlier about the way in which maybe primary and secondary schools can learn from one another in terms of their quite different ways of arranging things. I think it would be valuable. Also, we talked about the excellence in special schools. That's one of the things that we enjoy as inspectors, that we can go to the different sectors and see different strengths and weaknesses in those sectors. Certainly, there are a lot of strengths in the further education sector. I always remember, when I started inspecting, the great strength they had in self-evaluation. That's more common now in schools, but they led the way on self-evaluation, I felt. So, yes, I think that's a good idea to share expertise across the sectors.

[185] **Darren Millar:** There's obviously increasing collaboration post 14 and post 16 between schools and colleges these days. To what extent do you think that that is having a rub-off effect, if you like, in our secondary schools in terms of quality, in terms of leadership, in terms of performance?

[186] **Mr Rowlands:** I don't think it is, particularly, but—.

[187] **Ms Morgan:** No, I don't think so. I think there is potential for sharing best practice in leadership across sectors, but I think there's more work to be done. I don't think we are maximising the benefit of that yet.

[188] **Darren Millar:** And one final question—and it relates to post-16 education in schools—obviously, sixth forms are not subject to inspection in the same way that schools more generally are. Is there any particular reason

for that? Is that something that you think ought to be subject to more rigorous inspection in the future?

[189] **Mr Rowlands:** I think the truth is the opposite of what you said. They are subject to inspection in the same way as the rest of the school, but there is perhaps an argument that they should have more detailed inspection. We do inspect them. We visit lessons, we talk to teachers, we talk to students. We do exactly the same thing in sixth form as we do in key stages 3 and 4. I think the problem is that we don't have very good data on the sixth form. If you remember back to the review of qualifications, this was discussed at that point. One of the recommendations of the review of qualifications was that Estyn did a more detailed inspection of sixth form once the data were available. We didn't think we'd have to wait quite so long to get those data, but we've been told that it's likely to come this September, actually. We used to have quite detailed value-added data on the progress that was made between GCSE and A-level, which allowed us to do quite an in-depth analysis of the effectiveness of sixth form. Those data no longer are produced, but, hopefully, in future, we will have those data and we will be able to give more attention to sixth forms in our reports.

[190] **Darren Millar:** Okay, thank you.

[191] **Lynne Neagle:** Thank you. Okay. Just one final question: the Welsh Government is publishing a refreshed education improvement plan in the spring—what do you see as the key priorities to be in that plan?

[192] **Mr Rowlands:** I think I don't expect to see great u-turns or changes. I think it's a question of building on the current direction. The general sense of direction, I think, is the right one. I think what we need to do now is to implement those initiatives successfully. So, I'd be expecting to see some detail about how some of these things, such as the curriculum reform, are going to be implemented successfully.

[193] **Lynne Neagle:** And how big a priority would you expect to see the reduction of class sizes being?

[194] **Mr Rowlands:** If I remember the most recent announcement, it's going to be targeted in a specific area, and I think the evidence for targeting that for infant classes, particularly in areas of deprivation, makes a lot of sense.

[195] **Lynne Neagle:** Okay, thank you very much. Can I thank the chief

inspector and his team for attending this morning and answering all our questions? You will be sent a transcript to check for accuracy, as usual, but thank you very much for your time and for leading us in a very informative session. Thank you very much. The committee will now break until 11.10 a.m.

*Gohiriwyd y cyfarfod rhwng 10:57 ac 11:10.
The meeting adjourned between 10:57 and 11:10.*

**Ymchwiliad i Addysg a Dysgu Proffesiynol Athrawon—
Sesiwn Dystiolaeth 2
Inquiry into Teachers' Professional Learning and Education—
Evidence Session 2**

[196] **Lynne Neagle:** Can I welcome everybody back for item 3, which is our second evidence session in our inquiry into teachers' professional learning and education? I'm very pleased to welcome Tim Pratt, who is the director of the Association of School and College Leaders Cymru, Maureen Harris, who is headteacher of Bishop Hedley school and also president of ASCL Cymru, and Rob Williams, who is director of policy at the National Association of Head Teachers Cymru. So, thank you very much for your attendance and for the paper that you provided in advance. If you're happy, we'll go straight into questions. Can I just start by maybe asking each of you to outline what your involvement has been so far in the Welsh Government's reforms in this area?

[197] **Ms Harris:** Well, as a headteacher, in the front line of any reforms, then, in the practical implementation of any reforms, and also as part of a strategic group of heads who provide informal consultation to Welsh Government.

[198] **Lynne Neagle:** Thank you.

[199] **Mr Pratt:** I guess, probably, Rob and I are very, very similar, inasmuch as we're involved with civil servants. We have regular meetings and are involved through union partnership.

[200] **Lynne Neagle:** Okay.

[201] **Mr Williams:** Yes, and the only other thing to add to that is, as a head, I have link up with some of the local initial teacher training providers as well,

so we had some input with some of the accreditations, and they took place at their level.

[202] **Lynne Neagle:** Okay, thank you very much. Darren.

[203] **Darren Millar:** I just wanted to ask, if I can, about the sufficiency of resources to allow for investment in professional development for teachers. I notice that, in the evidence that you submitted, there was a suggestion, particularly in yours, Tim, that there was a complete lack of financial support for continuing professional development and that was hindering opportunities for teachers and reducing the quality of teaching. Do you want to just talk a little bit more about that and some of the challenges that you're facing?

[204] **Mr Pratt:** Yes. I think one of the issues is that money for professional development is hidden within other grants, and, therefore, that puts headteachers and school leaders who are already in financial difficulties in an almost impossible situation of where do you spread what little money there is. And our view would be, if, actually, there was a specific grant or fund for professional development within schools that, if you like, was ring-fenced, and a requirement that that's the money you have, it then makes it much easier for schools to use that money effectively, rather than, 'I've got this pot of money coming in under the title of EIG, which I could use for this, or I could use for that', and a bit of it would go here and a bit of it would go there, and there is an expectation that some of it would go on professional development. Perhaps, Maureen, you can add to that.

[205] **Ms Harris:** Well, I preferred it, as a headteacher, when we used to have it ring-fenced. Albeit that it was diminished so that there wasn't even enough for one professional course for every member of staff by the time it finished, there's even less now, because, as you said, Tim, you have to use it for a variety of resources, of which professional development is but one.

[206] **Darren Millar:** So, how long ago was it that the Welsh Government abandoned the ring fencing?

[207] **Ms Harris:** It's about four years, is it?

[208] **Mr Williams:** I think, actually, 2015 was when they spoke about greater flexibility within the education improvement grant, and that was the grant that includes all of those elements. You have things like the foundation

phase grant as well, but the SEG, the school effectiveness grant, was sat within it. One of the other things that we're picking up as a potential issue, I think, is also that the way in which that grant is allocated to schools is sometimes based on pupil numbers and not based on staffing numbers. So you might have schools where you'll have a high-level ratio of staffing—it might be a special school, for example—and, because it's based on a pupil level, actually there's less per staff member anyway. We can argue about the basic pot element—what's available for staff overall—but there should be a fairer way of distributing it.

[209] **Darren Millar:** And I assume that the costs that are associated with teacher training are not just the provision of a professional development course. You've got your in-service training days, and I think you make an argument for increasing those in the evidence—we've certainly seen that coming through—from the current five to seven, but, in addition, you've got to cover a teacher if they're taken out of the classroom for whatever reason.

11:15

[210] **Mr Pratt:** The thing with INSET days is, in some ways, they're fine, in other ways, you might say, 'Well, there are better ways of doing it'. One of the problems that some of our members face is that some local authorities will not allow them to use twilight sessions. In other words, you've got an INSET day, if I split it into five single hours and I put a couple of hours after school on one day and then, a couple of weeks later, another couple of hours, some local authorities don't like that as a principle, and—

[211] **Darren Millar:** Why?

[212] **Mr Pratt:** You tell me. They just don't. And I know that there are places where they make it very difficult for schools that want to do that. There's nothing legally wrong with it, but, actually, it could be a much more effective way, and there are schools now that have created a system whereby staff will use that time regularly after school, rather than having days. That sort of flexibility can make so much difference in terms of how effective that training is.

[213] **Ms Harris:** If I give a practical example of that, for example, in my school—and I don't like the night they've chosen; it doesn't do me any good—on a Thursday night, we stay until 6 p.m., every week, and that night we use for whole-school staff training, department meetings, anything that's

going on in the school. Everyone knows about it; it's calendared a year in advance, and the staff voted on it. They prefer it. What I find as a head is that I get far more professional development out of staff, because, say, they're looking at a topic such as literacy, they can do it throughout the year. Donaldson: we're using it for that; we're a curriculum pioneer school. So, we're using it for staff development, we use it for whole-staff training and they then split into their departments. It's very flexible, and it's legal, and I really don't know why some—

[214] **Darren Millar:** So, these smaller, more frequent chunks are better than the big chunks less frequently, is what you're saying to us, isn't it?

[215] **Ms Harris:** From my point of view, yes.

[216] **Darren Millar:** In terms of your experience.

[217] **Ms Harris:** Not all would agree with me, but, in terms of my staff, they voted for it, so I think if you consult with staff and you have a consensus, it doesn't need to go to a national professional association to say that it's not appropriate.

[218] **Darren Millar:** And, Rob Williams, your members would feel similarly about that, would they?

[219] **Mr Williams:** Well, you want the flexibility, I guess, to do what fits for your school, to some extent, because the description that Tim gave there has been used by members in the past, and it fits. I guess the challenge for local authorities, sometimes, is the reduction by—. If it was an INSET day that was set at the end of the term that then disappeared because you used it up, it's the impact upon parents and others, and also staff not being in school for that set number of days. I don't know. But one of the elements, I think, where the additional INSET days that we've suggested might assist is linking up those schools that have not been involved in the curriculum developments so proactively with those schools that have. There's an opportunity, maybe, where that could be assisting. But, in terms of professional development that's coming out of developing teaching quality, for example, which is highlighted in the Estyn annual report, those need to take place during the school day, if you like, because—

[220] **Darren Millar:** So, you're looking at practice and—

[221] **Mr Williams:** The analogy that somebody gave me was about passing your driving test. Once you've passed your driving test, you actually don't refine your road sense until you're driving more. Sitting in a classroom and studying about driving will not help you to be a better driver, and so it's similar with teaching: it takes place within the classroom. The issue around that, of course, is it's a resource-rich process.

[222] **Darren Millar:** And, just in terms of the resources, obviously they are finite; we know that there are financial challenges across the whole of the public sector. In terms of the cash that is available, are there more effective ways for it to be spent? So, in terms of the way that continuing professional development is currently structured, generally, across Wales, are there more effective ways of doing things that, perhaps, ought to be considered?

[223] **Mr Williams:** I think you need to look a little more widely at school budgeting, because I think the pressures that have caused the skewing of the use of the EIG, for example, come from an issue with variability in basic school funding. So, as you know, in our evidence, we talked about age-weighted pupil units, which are used to make up 70 per cent of a school's budget; the variability in those between specific age groups in different local authorities is massive. And there isn't this transparency around school budgeting, which means that, actually, it militates against effective use of the EIG, then, in that case. I still think that we would stress that, if it's talking about staff development, then its allocation should be based upon staffing, rather than on pupil numbers.

[224] **Darren Millar:** Okay, but this—. Yes.

[225] **Ms Harris:** I think collaboration with other schools furthers funding. So, for example, if you're buying in a programme of study, like we're buying in John Hattie's 'Visible Learning'—but we're collaborating; we can't afford it on our own. So, we're collaborating with another high school and we're having joint staff training.

[226] **Darren Millar:** How widespread is that sort of collaboration?

[227] **Ms Harris:** I don't know whether it's widespread, but it does go on.

[228] **Mr Pratt:** It's growing, I think, is the best way of putting it. I think the other critical thing here is that the less you take staff out of the classroom, the better the impact. The traditional INSET model was that you sent a

member of staff on a course for a day. Of course, whilst you're doing that, you've got to pay cover and you've got that person not teaching their classes. That's, if you like, a deficit model in terms of the impact, because that person will come back and only one person on the staff will have any benefit from it. Schools are moving away from that, and rightly so, because we need a model now that allows teachers to be in the classroom, doing their job, for the maximum amount of time. Actually, if—like in Maureen's school—you've got two hours a week, you can get somebody in, and that person can impact the whole staff or a proportion of the staff rather than just one person going to see—.

[229] **Darren Millar:** Are the consortia helping in terms of helping to shape CPD at the moment? Are they a resource that could have a better impact?

[230] **Mr Pratt:** They are. My only observation was that they do tend to ask schools to send people out during the school day. Not always, but, Maureen, you—.

[231] **Ms Harris:** Because it's difficult, really, for them to do otherwise, I suppose. Because of geography, if you're asking someone to travel from one end of the central south consortium to the other after school, it really does add significantly onto the school day, because it could take them an hour. Central south consortium have a progressively developing programme of CPD with the use of hub schools and professional learning schools. That is where staff come together in a school as a base. Some of the professional development demands that they undertake action research back in their own school. Of course, as Tim was saying, you used to send a person out, they'd receive their INSET, so what? With the action research model there is an element of some good being done from that CPD back within their own classroom, which may permeate throughout their own school.

[232] **Darren Millar:** Okay. And just one final question. Rob, you mentioned the variability of funding earlier on, and some changes that you would like to see to the way that funding is allocated. Obviously, we've got 22 different formulae operating in Wales at the moment in terms of the funding that goes to schools. Do you think that needs to be rationalised somewhat and, if so, how?

[233] **Mr Williams:** Yes. Well, given the line of travel for local authorities in terms of greater collaborative working, as Mark Drakeford has set out, I think there's an opportunity maybe to look at that. What we would like to see is

some clarity about the kinds of areas that have to be part of a formula for school budgets, so at least there's greater clarity and transparency, and so that if you're in a school, you know that you're not being disadvantaged just because of the postcode of your school. From work that the NAHT did some years ago now, looking at the school budget formulae, they're historical often and sometimes you can question whether they are really fit for purpose. I think, now, given the line of travel for local authorities in terms of how they're going to be expected to work together more collaboratively, it seems an opportune time to look at that.

[234] **Darren Millar:** So, that gives us the opportunity to look at that and, within that, a ring-fenced sort of allocation specifically for CPD, which is flexible. But, yes, I guess these economies of scale with organisations working together. Okay. Thank you.

[235] **Lynne Neagle:** Thank you. Hefin, then Llyr.

[236] **Hefin David:** Just a reflection. I think your evidence takes us on a very neat step forward from the session we had with the National Union of Teachers and others. I think you've kind of backed up what they've said and also taken it a step forward, as Darren Millar said about embedding the hours. So, that's correct, isn't it?

[237] **Ms Harris:** Yes.

[238] **Hefin David:** Yes. Maureen, you've mentioned, as a headteacher, action research. A key aspect of action research, I would say, is reflective practice.

[239] **Ms Harris:** Yes.

[240] **Hefin David:** To what extent are you embedding reflective practice as part of your professional development, and how are you doing that?

[241] **Ms Harris:** Well, I can only talk about my own school, but what we've done in my school is we've put everyone into triads. So, they work together. We had an issue with certain inadequate teachers, so we put in an excellent teacher—a mix of teaching—and we wanted to raise the professional standards within the classroom, which we have done successfully. For example, they will plan a lesson together, they might film the lesson or they might observe the lesson, they'll come back together, they'll analyse the lesson, they'll work out how to make it better, and the second member

delivers the lesson. Then they'll come back, they will reflect on it some more, and the third person should deliver what is by then an excellent lesson. So, in that way, they're looking at the skills of self-evaluation and analysis, they're looking at pedagogy, and they're building up a bank in the department of excellent lessons.

[242] **Hefin David:** Rob and Tim, is this good practice that is being shared across the sector?

[243] **Mr Williams:** Well, I was a head until 2015 and we did exactly what she's just described in terms of triads. What I would say about that is the challenge, particularly for primary schools, is the resource element of that, because you need to free up staff to be able to do that. It's an incredibly powerful tool, and if you're talking about developing a reflective pedagogy, which the degree I did, many years ago, was all about, I think we're talking about re-embedding that into ITE, for example, so that staff are coming out ready to think in those terms about being more professionally reflective. I think those are the programmes that really seem to tick the box.

[244] **Ms Harris:** I think one of the things that is missing in Wales, actually, is the lack of action research into pedagogy in the classroom from our universities and teacher training institutions. If you look at countries across the world, there's a great synergy between schools and professors in schools of education, where the schools of education actually use the classrooms in their country or state as a test bed of research. They work together, and in that way you have reflective practice, because they're constantly evaluating and analysing what is going on and how to improve.

[245] **Hefin David:** Why is international research not contextually applicable in Wales then? Why has it got to be Wales-specific research?

[246] **Mr Pratt:** I don't think that's—.

[247] **Ms Harris:** No, that's not what I'm saying. What I'm saying is that—and we do use international researchers, such as Michael Fullan, for example—if you go to Ontario, Michael Fullan has a bank of schools that he works with. So, if you go to Ontario, they've got the Ontario principals' organisation, and they are really dynamic and they're really active in their research within their own schools, as are their staff. The instigator, or the stimulus for that, to a certain extent, is Michael Fullan and his team of researchers. It's that synergy that is lacking in Wales.

[248] **Hefin David:** I'm sorry, I wasn't trying to catch you out there. I was just trying to clarify my own misunderstanding. But, if you look at the role of universities and their initial teacher training, then what you're talking about is developing communities of practice, and at the moment it seems that academics, maybe, are at an arm's length from what's happening in schools and that communities of practice would perhaps solve that problem.

[249] **Ms Harris:** Yes, I think so. I believe so. At the moment our teacher training institutions are teacher training institutions.

[250] **Hefin David:** Not research led—.

[251] **Ms Harris:** Yes.

[252] **Hefin David:** Right, okay. Finally, the Education Workforce Council has identified the professional learning passport. Are you aware of significant use of this free non-mandatory tool?

[253] **Ms Harris:** No.

[254] **Mr Pratt:** Colleagues know about it, but how much they're using it, yet—. It's one of those things where you would like to think that every teacher would want to keep a record of what they're doing. But, I know from my own experience as a head, and some years ago as a deputy, that staff would come to me and say, 'I did a course, didn't I? What was it and when did I do it?' And you think, 'Well, surely you would be keeping that note.' The professional learning passport ought to give them a way to, if you like, ensure that they don't have to ask those questions.

[255] **Hefin David:** But it doesn't.

[256] **Ms Harris:** Well, I think it's a change in culture, isn't it? And I think the young teachers coming through will bring that culture with them, but someone who's been teaching 10 years, 15 years, they do still go and ask the person in charge of INSET what they've been on.

[257] **Hefin David:** Okay, thank you.

[258] **Mr Williams:** I think, it's the worth of it in itself. If, as a professional, you see worth in using it, i.e. if you've got ambitions for progression through

the profession, you are likely to invest in that, because when you do applications they ask about your previous CPD and so forth. So, if there's worth in using it, it will be used.

[259] **Hefin David:** Okay, thank you.

[260] **Lynne Neagle:** Okay, thank you. Llyr.

11:30

[261] **Llyr Gruffydd:** Thank you, Chair. Just to conclude on finance and professional development, the former education Minister said, of course, that the new deal isn't about new money. Would you assert that new money has to be found if the Government is to achieve what it hopes to achieve through the new deal, or are you accepting the situation that, actually, it's going to be a case of changing working practices, more collaboration, and those kinds of things as opposed to more money?

[262] **Mr Pratt:** We'd love to have more money, but I think we have to be pragmatic and accept that the education budget is what it is. That doesn't mean that we don't think that what is there could be better used, and I think that's a very long discussion that we probably haven't got time for now. But that is the budget that we've got. If more money could be found, brilliant, but actually, what we would rather spend our time and effort on is making sure that what we've got is used in the most effective way.

[263] **Llyr Gruffydd:** So, who drives that change, then? Would it be the consortia?

[264] **Mr Pratt:** The consortia have a role in it. The local authorities, of course, have a role in it, because effectively they're the ones that are funding the schools and deciding how much goes into each school. Then you get into the whole question of funding formulas and one of the things that we're quite exercised about is the fact that, if you go across Wales, almost every single local authority has a different funding formula that they use. Our view is that we actually need a common formula that local authorities must apply.

[265] **Ms Harris:** I think there has to be a change of culture amongst headteachers as well. The local consortia provide the right climate and conditions and they have a role in the use of the challenge adviser in highlighting where the best practice is for collaboration. But headteachers

also have a role to play in driving forward the climate within their own school. They are the lead learner.

[266] **Mr Williams:** I think we'd agree with that. I think the leadership sets the tone. I think that there is a need for more resource for the professional learning to take place. Whether that's about more resource coming into the overall education budget or whether we use the education budget more strategically, I think that may be an answer. I think we would say that we need to be doing fewer things well, and focus on fewer things. Because given the range and level of reform taking place at the moment, it's a huge challenge for schools to address all those things.

[267] **Lynne Neagle:** Thank you.

[268] **Ms Harris:** I think schools would be happy if they could have two extra INSET days, because if you take the five at the moment in a secondary school, the first two days are basically spent as a whole school looking over the outcomes from the previous year, looking at the school improvement plan, feeding it all back into the department improvement plans, et cetera. Ethos, that takes two days, and then there's the professional development to take place on top of that, so you've got three days.

[269] **Lynne Neagle:** Thank you. Julie.

[270] **Julie Morgan:** I had wanted to follow up what Hefin was asking. Is there no university, college or anything that uses the schools to further their research? Is there nothing in Wales at all?

[271] **Ms Harris:** No, we're not saying that.

[272] **Julie Morgan:** What are you saying exactly, then?

[273] **Ms Harris:** There are one or two who will use them. So, for example, Cardiff University uses schools to send PhD students out. They work alongside teachers, and what I do is I ask them to do a bit of a review of the work that we're doing as a quid pro quo, so we're getting something out of it as well. So, Cardiff University is good at that.

[274] **Julie Morgan:** So it is happening.

[275] **Ms Harris:** Yes.

[276] **Julie Morgan:** But not in a systematic way, as in Canada, with the example you used in Canada.

[277] **Ms Harris:** Exactly.

[278] **Julie Morgan:** But you did say that depended on an individual as well, didn't you?

[279] **Ms Harris:** No, I just used him as an example. I can think of people in British Columbia, I can think of people in New Zealand who are also doing similar work.

[280] **Julie Morgan:** So that's something that you'd like to see more of happening in Wales, because it seems very logical, doesn't it?

[281] **Ms Harris:** Yes, cutting-edge first-class research, using our schools. Teachers—you see, there would be the model then for them to emulate. They would learn the skills.

[282] **Mr Pratt:** The question is: is it a priority for our universities? I guess if you went to universities and said, 'Why aren't you doing more of this?', they'd say, 'We haven't got the money to do it.' But actually, I am sure that, again, it's use of resources rather than additional resource. If it became a priority for universities because of Government requirements, a way would be found, and actually that would be of significant benefit to education.

[283] **Lynne Neagle:** Okay, thank you. Oscar has a question on peer-to-peer and school-to-school learning.

[284] **Mohammad Asghar:** Thank you very much. Just before that question, Chair, I would like to ask Maureen about—. She gave the Canadian example, which is pretty good. What about Singapore and the Koreans and others in the PISA results? I heard a few times about financing, and 'If money is there, yes', but money is not everything. In those countries, they spend much less per pupil and get better results in PISA and other academic achievements from their children. Why can't we? That is the point we have to think about, and learn, rather than just going somewhere where you throw a lot of money and don't get the results.

[285] **Ms Harris:** Well, we're not saying that you throw a lot of money at

something—I don't think any of us are saying that, particularly. We could spend a whole day talking about PISA, and Singapore in particular. Colleagues work in Singapore as university professionals, and in Malaysia, and it's a very different culture, even down to the way schools are chosen to do the PISA tests.

[286] **Mohammad Asghar:** Anyway, my question to you now is: are there any aspects or topics of professional development training—are there any gaps that you think can be filled?

[287] **Mr Williams:** I think there's been a gap, which has been acknowledged, I think, in leadership development throughout the system. I think there are opportunities to develop things like resilience in leadership, particularly in managing change, since the change is so huge at the moment, and I also think there's an opportunity now to look, given the Donaldson steer, at drilling down to the core purpose of assessment, because I think assessment drives good teaching and learning. It's an integral element in that, and I think, as a result of unintended consequences through the way in which schools are held to account, that's been skewed over recent years. But I think there's been an acknowledgement through the leadership academy, for example, looking at leadership development from top to bottom, if you like, that there is a need to look at that, and that's been something that's been lacking over recent years, certainly, for us.

[288] **Mohammad Asghar:** Okay; thank you. And now I'll go to—

[289] **Lynne Neagle:** Does anybody else want to come in on that?

[290] **Mr Pratt:** I think there's been a lack of a national leadership programme. We used to have a very good leadership programme, and it took leaders when they were appointed, and that was of enormous value. There was the LPSH, which was for serving headteachers and, again, that was a useful point, five or six years into a role, to develop skills. And all that has disappeared. Now, some of that is to do with funding, and, as somebody who benefited from both parts of that programme, I can see why there were issues with funding, because a lot of it, frankly, was a little bit wasteful. For the LPSH, we were sent to a very nice hotel for three days, it must have cost an absolute fortune, and actually could have been done in a much more cost-effective way and still have benefited people. So, I think that sort of quality of leadership development work, taken from when somebody starts in a leadership role and continuing to work with them, not only improves the

individual, but actually it was a sharing process and so that, as a group of heads working on that, or a group of deputies, you actually benefited across the whole of the group, and you went back to your own schools having learned things from each other. And it would be really good to put back into the system something that allowed people to develop within leadership roles. One of the problems I think that we have is that you get to being a head and it's almost at that point that people say, 'Well, you've done your learning, you're now in charge.' And actually, those of us who have been heads know that you're constantly learning, and actually you do need that opportunity to refresh, to look again and to pick up some of the new ideas so that you can make sure that you are constantly challenging yourself and your school to improve and be better and better.

[291] **Lynne Neagle:** Okay; thank you.

[292] **Mohammad Asghar:** So, what you're saying is there's a bit of a lack of leadership in the system.

[293] **Mr Pratt:** I think, in continuing to develop leadership in the system, yes.

[294] **Ms Harris:** I was just thinking of myself. I've been a head for 11 years. I went on the professional induction, I went on the LPSH, but that was a long time ago. And then last year, Central South put on a course for serving headteachers, which I went to; it consisted of about four or five days over 18 months, and it was really beneficial—really, really beneficial. I was with a group of experienced heads, and it was collaborative. It was all about collaboration, reflection, having a look at your style—and I have changed enormously in those 11 years. And I think it's providing people with time. As someone said earlier on about reflection, you reflect on your progress, how you can be better, how you can bring dynamism to your school and inspire your staff. That's really important.

[295] **Mr Williams:** There have been examples of leadership programmes, but it's not as widespread as it should be. I think that's the challenge. For example, there will be peer review models being used in some of the consortia. There was a middle-level leadership programme that was in place in the local authority where I was working. But those things are not joined up, and so there's an element, I think, of accessibility variation across Wales. It depends on where you are as to what's available and what you access. But as Maureen says, those who've gone on to the courses that are available—

and certainly our members that have been part of the peer review model—have said that it's a very robust but really, really good programme in terms of equipping them as school leaders, and developing their leadership as they go along.

[296] **Mohammad Asghar:** Thank you very much, and I've got this one—

[297] **Lynne Neagle:** Very quickly, Oscar.

[298] **Mohammad Asghar:** In certain parts of the world, where an exceptionally good headteacher or teacher retires, somebody who should be replacing that person—they actually work with them for six months to a year before that person is released. Anyway, I'll go to the next topic, Chair.

[299] **Lynne Neagle:** No, because we're staying on this for a minute. Llyr has a question.

[300] **Llyr Gruffydd:** I just wanted to ask what you thought about the value of the—I know the Welsh acronym is CPCP—it's the NPQH in English. Clearly, I've had a certain view expressed to me about the value of that exercise, if you like, and I'm just wondering whether you feel that's what it could be or should be, or whether that, actually, is an opportunity to start building some of these experiences that heads or aspiring heads should be exposed to.

[301] **Ms Harris:** I undertook the NPQH many years ago in one of its earliest formats, and part of that was an action research project in the school—invaluable. It isn't there anymore, and I think that's a lack—. It's very much a paper exercise with a very—. I'm an assessor for central south. It's very onerous. It covers a multitude of skills. One of my assistant heads went through it last year, and she said it made her pause and reflect, but she's doing it in isolation; she's not doing it in collaboration with other people. And I think it could be improved, but I wouldn't get rid of it.

[302] **Lynne Neagle:** Okay. Oscar, was it on a different topic, or—?

[303] **Mohammad Asghar:** I'll go on to the next topic now.

[304] **Lynne Neagle:** No, we're going on—

[305] **Mohammad Asghar:** I'll go to school-to-school learning.

[306] **Lynne Neagle:** Go on, then.

[307] **Mohammad Asghar:** To what extent is peer-to-peer and school-to-school learning occurring in Wales? What are the barriers to this practice?

[308] **Mr Williams:** I think in terms of barriers, there are elements around cost that we talk about. There's also the bit that Tim referred to earlier about managing staff. So, my school is quite a small primary school. To ensure that all of my teachers were able to access professional learning, I had to manage that quite carefully because, of course, if they're out of the classroom too frequently then you've got to manage the impact upon the pupils. And we've got to try and aim to minimise the impact on pupils in terms of its negative effect of having teachers out of class. So, I think that's one of the issues. It comes back to my point about accessibility as well to whatever is available in the area where you are. And also, to some extent for schools, it needs to be fairly bespoke, because schools are in different places. Their development and what's needed for their staff is in different places, and I think that's the challenge for a national programme in any element: trying to pick up a range of needs within a single programme. That's a huge challenge. So, there needs to be some element of it meeting the need in the local area, but there needs to be consistency of access as well across Wales.

[309] **Mr Pratt:** One other thing that is in this problem is to do with accountability. The performance measures that we have at the moment have a certain number of unforeseen consequences. One of the unforeseen consequences, I reckon, is that schools don't necessarily want to share with neighbours that they're being measured against and, actually, I think that's a negative thing. I think we have to have accountability that is more intelligent, rather than, 'I'm constantly looking over my shoulder because I don't want the school across the road to catch up too much, because it might make my school look less effective and I might attract fewer students or fewer high-quality staff'. Somehow, we've got to get to a situation where those are no longer at the forefront of people's minds, so that we are more willing to share. Some schools do share an awful lot; others are somewhat reticent about it.

[310] **Lynne Neagle:** Thank you. Okay, we're going to move on now to talk about Estyn's role. Julie.

[311] **Julie Morgan:** Thank you, Chair. We've had Estyn in here before you, and we've had examples of good practice and, obviously, their report

provides advice that schools could follow. How much notice is taken of Estyn within the schools, and how do you follow their examples of good practice?

11:45

[312] **Mr Williams:** I think a great deal of notice, because, as school leaders, we know that, at some point, Estyn will come calling and look at the school and how you're performing. I think there has been a shift in the understanding of Estyn's role by Estyn themselves, in conversations with the profession, talking about being part of the improvement process. There was a perception about judgement and disappearing before, and I think there's a shift to be part of the solutions and to assist schools in making improvements where they need. But heads would be foolish to ignore the messages within Estyn. I think the challenge sometimes, and particularly through this Estyn annual report, was ensuring that the messaging was clear in the wider world, because the media like to leap on a certain position, shall we say, and the impression that was given was that it was a criticism of school leadership in not developing teaching. Actually, if you read the report more fully, it talks about freeing up the role, if you like, for school leaders to concentrate on developing teaching.

[313] I think the messages around it were around time, space and resource to do that. So, I don't know of any school leaders who would ignore Estyn's messaging. I guess from a school leader's point of view, they will reflect on what it means for their school and how they will be able to deliver it, and that's the challenge.

[314] **Mr Pratt:** The benefit of Estyn's advice is that it is national and it presents a national picture, and there's nowhere else that we can get a national picture of what is happening in certain aspects of education. So, it's definitely of use there. And I think the majority of schools will look at the reports that Estyn produce—the thematic reports—very closely, because, again, it allows you to pick up ideas that you might not otherwise have access to.

[315] **Mr Williams:** I think one of the other challenges too is a point that Tim referred to earlier, which is about aligning the accountability measures that come into schools. There are examples at the moment where certain lines of accountability will paint a certain picture, and then Estyn will come in and paint a different picture. And we would probably argue that the reason for that is that some of the accountability measures, not Estyn, are a little bit

blunt and aren't intelligent enough to measure the kind of things that need to be measured. If you get that kind of disconnect—. So, for example, categorisation as it stands is a challenge for schools. It's something that happens every single year, and if that steers certain behaviour at school then, because you know you're going to be categorised every single year, that sometimes isn't necessarily helpful. And what I mean by that is you'll have outcome obsession in terms of categorisation that takes no account of the variability you'll get in a cohort of pupils. Estyn can use more intelligence in their measures, I would argue, and so, I think the messaging there sometimes is a little bit confusing for schools, and we need to align those accountability measures so that they're steering the kind of behaviours that we want to encourage at school level.

[316] **Julie Morgan:** Right. So, basically, you see Estyn as a help.

[317] **Mr Williams:** They should be, yes.

[318] **Mr Harris:** Particularly the thematic reports.

[319] **Julie Morgan:** And just to say—. Who ultimately do you think is responsible for creating the atmosphere for good professional learning?

[320] **Ms Harris:** Well, I would say it's the role of the head in the school, supported by the governing body, to drive forward and create a climate in which it's permissible to make mistakes and take a risk in the classroom, so that people can experiment and find the best ways to develop their pedagogy.

[321] **Julie Morgan:** And how much does that happen now?

[322] **Ms Harris:** I think it's increasing.

[323] **Mr Pratt:** It depends on the school. There are schools where people are very unwilling to take risks, possibly because they are categorised as red, and there's a lot of pressure on them to improve the basics. And rather than take the risk and try something new, and potentially something that might not quite work first time—but you might learn a lot from it—you retreat, you put your head below the parapet and you just do what you know works. Now, that isn't necessarily improving the system, and it isn't necessarily making the experience of the children in that school better. It's a minimalist approach that says, 'I will do what I have to in order to get by.' And we would

always want schools to be encouraged and feel that it's something that they would want to do. We talk about using academics and action research in the classroom, and, actually, that's precisely the point at which, if you're doing action research, you have to take a risk. You have to say, 'This might not work, but I think it will'. Therefore, I will do this experiment; I will try this out in the classroom and if it doesn't work exactly as I think it will do to start with, I will refine it and I will find a way to make it work.'

[324] **Ms Harris:** Or you might never do it again. [*Laughter.*]

[325] **Julie Morgan:** And you mentioned the role of the governing body. How much is the governing body involved in discussing professional development?

[326] **Mr Williams:** I think, coming back to the point that Maureen made about the head being the lead, you're absolutely right in creating that culture, but actually it's everybody's responsibility in terms of creating that culture because there needs to be a release of pressure to allow school leaders to do that, and also some recognition of the value of doing it.

[327] I think that the school governing body has a key role to play in that—in backing, if you like, trusting their school leaders. They appointed them, so trust them to do the job they appointed them to do, which is to develop great teaching in their schools. That's sometimes easier said than done, when you're looking at different pressures that are created by external accountability in particular. But that's what it should be and that's how school leaders need to be equipped and so, everybody—. And I talk about everybody in terms of Welsh Government and in terms of their policies, reflecting on whether they assist that or not, in terms of consortia, in terms of the support that they give, in terms of local authority and in terms of governing bodies and the schools. If we're saying that that's the important thing, then those things have to work together to enable that to happen.

[328] **Ms Harris:** I do think the draft professional standards as they stand at present support the school and the teacher in that.

[329] **Lynne Neagle:** Okay. Hefin.

[330] **Hefin David:** I think it would only be fair, Rob, given some of the things that you've said, to draw your attention to some of the evidence we had from Estyn in the previous session. A sentence I unfairly picked out of

context from their report, which said:

[331] 'Although many schools are drawing more on research to identify strategies for improvement—

[332] with regard to professional practice

[333] —the implementation of these strategies is superficial when leaders do not ensure that practitioners fully understand the thinking behind them.'

[334] Given what you've said in your initial response to Julie Morgan, is that fair, unfair or can you put that into more context?

[335] **Mr Williams:** I think it may well be fair in some respects, but it depends on—. In terms of the sampling that Estyn would take, they took—. I think the highest percentage they take in any sector is about 16 per cent in terms of their annual report reflections. I think it paints a picture. For certain schools, there are challenges, but we know that that variability exists and it exists for various reasons. It depends on where the school is at a given time. We know, for example, the schools that were being categorised in either 'amber' and particularly into 'red', where actually the amount of time they have to invest in the key core basics to get themselves to move out of those categories means that other areas sometimes get neglected. I think that that sometimes is an unhelpful process.

[336] We've said all the way along—and we would love to do a piece of work on it, to highlight, in schools that are categorised 'red' and 'amber', some of the outstanding practice that takes place in those schools, too. The idea that that single colour paints the picture of that school is an unhelpful one. And it gives the impression of a league table and, actually, the categorisation was all about support. I think that's my fear around it—that sometimes it's not that there is an unwillingness to do it, and it was something that we put out in the press when the Estyn report came out. I've yet to meet a school leader who does not want to invest that time in developing good teaching, but sometimes the pressures upon them at the given time in the immediacy of those pressures means that they simply can't commit that at that time.

[337] **Lynne Neagle:** Okay, thank you. We're going to go on now to talk about initial teacher education. John.

[338] **John Griffiths:** Thanks, Chair. To begin with, I was wondering whether

you have any concerns about the implementation of the Furlong report—implementation to date. Has that caused you any concerns at all?

[339] **Mr Pratt:** I think we'd like to see it happen faster. It seems to be very slow at the moment. We fully support the report and the recommendations of Professor Furlong, but in some part of Wales, not a lot seems to be happening.

[340] **Ms Harris:** I've been to one or two presentations by institutions about how they're going to implement it and my concern is that there seems to be an inordinate amount of responsibility, should we say, for the delivery placed upon the school, without the appropriate funding coming along with it to release a member of staff to oversee the number of student teachers they were expected to oversee, whether it would be in their own school or in some cases on a cluster basis—a cluster of schools—and I think that needs more thinking through.

[341] **John Griffiths:** Okay. And Rob?

[342] **Mr Williams:** We share the concerns about the timetable. I think, particularly when you look at the implications within 'Successful Futures', we'll be expecting new teachers coming in to the profession over the coming years to be prepared and ready for that new way of working, and unless the initial teacher education system gets up to speed with that, there's going to be a lag, so you'll have practitioners coming in to the system and schools are going to have to pick up the slack, if you like, if they're not up to speed with the current ways of thinking and working.

[343] We have some concerns about the selection around what is deemed an effective school in terms of who will be involved in delivering ITE, and I think, actually, for us, it's about having individuals who have a really rich experience before they come in to the profession full-time.

[344] **John Griffiths:** In terms of ensuring that the initial teacher training is everything it needs to be for the new curriculum and the new system, do you think that that new system, and that new curriculum, is sufficiently developed at the current time to enable that to translate into initial teacher training and what initial teacher training needs to be comprised of?

[345] **Mr Williams:** I think the focus needs to be on the right things, and, actually, if you're talking about the roll-out of successful futures, obviously,

the concerns raised by the committee in the letter they sent around 'Successful Futures' I think were legitimate and right. But what I would say is that this is a brand-new process for all schools in Wales, and, actually, with the timetable we set on that, we said to them at the very beginning that there needed to be pragmatism based around that, because it's an iterative process and, as we go along, we may decide we need to be a little bit more careful about bringing some things in sooner than we may have thought, and other things may need to be delayed until they're properly ready before we implement it. I think the key bit for ITE, from our point of view, is about those dispositions we're looking for within the teaching profession. I think worrying less about the content element within the curriculum so much as having teachers who understand about that reflective pedagogy, about the expectations around the profession, those kinds of things can and should be being developed now in ITE.

[346] **John Griffiths:** Okay, thanks for that.

[347] **Mr Pratt:** I was just going to say that I think one of the dangers that we have to be careful about with ITE is that we don't adopt a very simplistic, one-size-fits-all model. For some ITE students, they might need two years before they're ready. Some might do it in one. Some might need 24 weeks in school. Some might need 36 weeks in school. And we need to be a little bit more flexible in order that, when we finally put a teacher into the classroom in their own right, they are properly prepared for that, rather than, 'I've done the course', and then there is this assumption that you're good enough, and it's not always the case. And, actually, some teachers who have developed and become really good teachers have struggled for the first year, and would probably have benefited from more time in a training phase, rather than being thrown in at the deep end and then having to develop. Sometimes, that's down to the quality of the people in the school who have guided those, but, actually, the whole process could have been easier with a little bit more flexibility.

[348] **John Griffiths:** I was going to go on to ask you, actually, as to whether you thought the 24 weeks in the classroom was long enough. From what you say, perhaps sometimes it will be, but other times it will not be, and that's it in a nutshell, really, isn't it?

[349] **Mr Williams:** I think the critical evidence for us, as well, is very, very early on, and in terms of selection to ITE, having the profession as part of the solution, if you like, because I think—. Certainly, I've been involved in some

of the selection processes for initial teacher training, and sometimes, in terms of setting a criterion, their academic experiences have been very, very good, but from a practitioner's point of view, we'd have some concern over certain candidates who would be coming into the profession maybe for the wrong reasons. I think it's important the profession, either school leaders or those leading mentors in the schools, are involved in that from the very outset, and the likelihood, we would hope, is that you would have fewer of those occasions where people are less prepared than they need to be when they're coming into the profession.

[350] **Ms Harris:** I think for those for whom teaching is a vocation, you can tell within a month they're born teachers, and then there are others who might have, as you said, excellent academic backgrounds and they can't teach.

[351] **John Griffiths:** Okay. Well, could I go on to ask you, then, about the draft accreditation criteria recently consulted upon, your views on them and whether they are likely to help produce the sort of teachers, the skills, that we need for the system and curriculum that we will have in the future?

12:00

[352] **Mr Pratt:** It's got to be flexible—I'm going to keep on saying flexible. What we've got so far is fine but, as we develop the Donaldson agenda, it may need to change. I don't think we can be in a situation saying, 'Right, that's it.' We've got to allow for further development.

[353] **Mr Williams:** I think so—. Accreditation has got to be in a way that allows it to develop as the reforms in Welsh education develop, to some extent. I think if we're too rigid from this point onwards, we may have to adjust as we go along even further. I say one of the key bits for us is about assessing the kind of experiences that we think the student teachers should be having prior to coming into the profession full-time, and also the kind of school responsibility and that those schools can deal with the level of input that's going to be required to support those on ITE programmes, while still ensuring that the pupils within those schools get a first-class education. I think there's a big challenge around that. So, the selection of those schools and the type of experiences we want student teachers to have are crucial.

[354] **John Griffiths:** Okay, great. Thank you very much, Chair.

[355] **Lynne Neagle:** Thank you very much. Oscar.

[356] **Mohammad Asghar:** Thank you very much, Chair. I think that teachers and headteachers are the backbone of our next generation—their ability, quality and standard. It should be that much—. In our part of the world, we know that a serious number of days have been lost because of the stress on teachers. It's hard at the moment to recruit headteachers in Wales. Could you tell us what the reason is?

[357] **Ms Harris:** Well, I love it. I think it's the most exciting job. I can't imagine doing anything else. However, it's the accountability pressure for some, I think. Staff in certain schools can see the pressure that their headteachers are under and that makes the decision for them—you know, it's an ending, really, at that moment. I think everything my colleagues have said about the accountability measures needs to be considered carefully, because it's an unintended consequence.

[358] **Mohammad Asghar:** We are talking about the quality of headteachers, not quantity. The quantity can be had. You just said earlier that an academic cannot be a good teacher. I said earlier, in previous scrutiny, that there's a good-old Greek saying: knowledge is a virtue, virtue can be taught, so knowledge can be taught. That's not me, I think it was Aristotle. So, basically, knowledge can be transferred. So, we only need to train these people and get traction. Why is there not the traction in our education system to bring good academics and good brains into the teaching profession?

[359] **Mr Williams:** I think there are lots of things that put pressure on it. I think the media image of schools and education is often not portrayed very positively. I think the media quite like stories—they tend to like to highlight stories that give maybe a negative steer on things, which is unhelpful. A case in point was the Estyn annual report. I thought there was a lot in that Estyn annual report that was positive that wasn't flagged up very highly. The headline was about the teaching quality.

[360] I think there's an element around work-life balance for school leaders and for teachers. School leaders have got to have a lead in that, to some extent. I think there needs to be honest discussions around that. From a school leaders' point of view, local authorities expect us to manage stress levels and the well-being of our staff in school. I'm not sure that's always delivered for headteachers to the same extent. Part of that is that employees

are not on site with the headteachers all the time. I think we also need to talk about freeing up the role of headteachers. As I said before, the clue is in the name. We are head 'teachers'. So, teaching is the thing that really interests us most. So, it's freeing up the heads to allow them to focus on that as their core purpose and the releasing of bureaucracy. I know there's a bureaucracy project that the Welsh Government have been looking at, looking at things like where we have to duplicate things that we do sometimes, the over-reliance on some overly bureaucratic and administrative functions that heads maybe have to do, and looking to see if we can free it up so it can be—.

[361] I agree with Maureen, my period as head—it was the best job in education. The difficulty is that the image it sometimes has for the wider profession is not that way. My wife's a teacher and has said to me, quite openly, 'I've lived with you for 10 years and there's no way I'd be a headteacher.' That's maybe my problem in the way I portrayed it, but I enjoyed the job. I think we have to be part of the solution as well as painting the picture as it is. But I think we need to realise the challenges around that, and maybe why people portray it as a role that they no longer want to aspire to.

[362] **Ms Harris:** Yes. Succession planning—I think heads have to actively plan for succession. They have to identify potential headteachers and, if they embrace the idea, to train them. As you said, knowledge can be acquired. But, a simple scenario: my school, I have x number of teachers who are suitable, one of them is interested—only one. I've got one person who said to me yesterday, who's a very, very successful head of department—she said, 'I would like to be a deputy headteacher, but no way on earth do I want to be a headteacher'. It's just, as you said, the view that's portrayed in the media. I always go out with a smile on my face—it cannot be anything I've said in school, I'm sure. But it is about portraying the profession as something worthwhile, attractive. It's a position to influence the lives of children, and that, for me, is gold.

[363] **Lynne Neagle:** Thank you. Darren.

[364] **Darren Millar:** I just wanted to ask about some of the challenges in recruiting new teachers at the moment. From my experience of going around Wales, speaking to headteachers, they say that one of the biggest problems is finding subject specialists particularly for science, mathematics, and, of course, Welsh-medium schools are really struggling to find people who are proficient in the language to be able to deliver subjects through the medium

of Welsh. What action do you think the Government needs to take in order to entice more people into the profession? I mean the bursaries are very low here compared to elsewhere.

[365] **Ms Harris:** Could I say something about the bursaries?

[366] **Darren Millar:** Please.

[367] **Ms Harris:** I had a first-class honours physics teacher who left at October half-term. And my school, the discipline, et cetera—it's an easy school to teach in, really. There is no means of pulling back the bursary; someone has taken a bursary without any commitment to a year in the teaching profession. It's left my school in a dreadful situation; I have no physics specialist. I do think that the Assembly should take cognisance of the fact that some students will drop out before Christmas. And there should be some means of recouping that money that has been invested in them.

[368] **Darren Millar:** Okay. That's in terms of the way the existing bursary scheme works at the moment.

[369] **Ms Harris:** Yes.

[370] **Darren Millar:** But I was specifically asking, more widely: do you think the bursary scheme is generous enough? Do you think that those opportunities to entice people into the profession are there, those hooks? How does it compare? Does it compare well with England, Scotland, Northern Ireland, or less well? I appreciate what you say about recouping money once it's been sent out—

[371] **Ms Harris:** I just wanted to say it, for you to take note of it.

[372] **Darren Millar:** —in order that there can be an equal contract, if you like, with some equal commitment on both sides.

[373] **Mr Pratt:** I think the bursary scheme is useful, but there's an underlying issue, and that is that, if you look at the areas where it's really, really hard to recruit people, they are the areas where the accountability stakes are so very high. And we could all give examples of heads of core departments who have given up the role because they're tired of constantly being under the cosh, being the people who are expected to deliver week in, week out, without any form of relaxation of pressure. And, if you are in a

secondary school as a maths or an English teacher at the moment, you are constantly under pressure, and science is coming on board with the new accountability measures. And, actually, we need to stop and think a little bit about what we're doing to our teachers as they develop. If we are putting them under that much pressure, and we're not allowing them the potential to be experimental, to develop their own work, to look at ways of delivering the curriculum that are exciting and innovative, then, actually, we do have an issue. And that is part of why we are struggling to get teachers. You will get people coming into school to have a look, to talk to your staff, and being very worried about, 'Am I really going to have to put up with this the whole time?' Now, that's a little bit—I'm not exaggerating, but it isn't the only thing. But it is definitely a pressure that is there.

[374] **Darren Millar:** Earlier on though, Mr Pratt, you were saying that there needed to be perhaps more accountability in some areas, so—. I mean, there's got to be a balance there, I appreciate that.

[375] **Mr Pratt:** A balance. We have to have accountability. None of us would say that we want a system where's there's no accountability. What we need, though, is intelligent accountability, where what we are asking schools to do drives behaviours that we want to see.

[376] **Darren Millar:** So, you're saying it's more about removing those disincentives—the negatives, if you like—than putting a more attractive offer on the table to draw people in.

[377] **Mr Williams:** I think, in terms of a financial package, if you like, I'm not sure that's necessarily the driver for the vast majority of teachers coming into schools. I think there's a lot to do—and you've heard evidence from both colleagues at the table—around the conditions as much as the pay, if you like, of the role. We know of heads of secondary schools, who, because they're the only person that holds a degree in a certain subject, are having to teach over recent years. And it seems, in certain parts of Wales, particularly the more rural parts of Wales, it's harder still to recruit, particularly into areas like maths and sciences. So, I think we need to look broader around the conditions in terms of the working conditions, rather than just around a bursary, for example, that might start to recruit in. But I think it may be also reflective of those kinds of degrees that you would be looking at—into the maths and sciences—and the options that those people have in terms of the different employment they could take anyway, and whether they—. What would make them choose to come into teaching in the first place, I think, is

the challenge.

[378] **Darren Millar:** Yes. There's a potential—

[379] **Lynne Neagle:** Darren, briefly, because we're out of time.

[380] **Darren Millar:** There's a potential downward spiral here, though, isn't there? Because if you don't have subject specialists delivering, then that can reduce the opportunity for learners to develop in those areas and get good grades, and then want to go on to study them themselves and teach them themselves. But that cycle is continuing. It doesn't appear to be getting any better in the short term, certainly, or the medium term, and you're saying we should just continue to have, on offer, the same hooks into the profession but take away these stings—the sticks that are beating people out of the profession. Yes?

[381] **Ms Harris:** We haven't got a magic wand.

[382] **Darren Millar:** Okay.

[383] **Ms Harris:** I mean, undoubtedly, they can earn more in industry. Undoubtedly. I've had one Teach First maths teacher who's an actuary now in London, and there's no comparison. We can't match that.

[384] **Darren Millar:** Of course, yes.

[385] **Ms Harris:** So, one element, as you alluded to, was how we engage with them as students perhaps to consider teaching as a profession.

[386] **Darren Millar:** But it strikes me, though, it's more about the atmosphere in schools.

[387] **Ms Harris:** Yes.

[388] **Darren Millar:** Yes?

[389] **Ms Harris:** Yes.

[390] **Mr Pratt:** That's not always driven by the school. It's sometimes driven by external—.

[391] **Darren Millar:** Okay.

[392] **Lynne Neagle:** Okay. Thank you very much. Well, we're out of time. So, can I thank you very much for your attendance this morning, and for the evidence that you've given the committee, which has been very useful? You will be sent a transcript in due course to check for accuracy, but thank you very much, again, for coming. Thank you.

12:12

Papurau i'w Nodi Papers to Note

[393] **Lynne Neagle:** Okay. Item 4, then, we'll move on to, is papers to note. Paper to note 4 is a letter from the Welsh Language Commissioner to the Minister for Lifelong Learning and Welsh Language that we've been copied into.

[394] **Darren Millar:** Chair—

[395] **Lynne Neagle:** On this.

[396] **Darren Millar:** Yes, it is on this. Can I suggest that we get the commissioner in to have a discussion about her concerns? I think it would be useful just to have a single session with her.

[397] **Lynne Neagle:** Okay. That's something we could look at. We're mindful that we're also waiting for the culture committee to complete its work on Welsh-medium education. So, it might be useful if we wait until that has concluded—

[398] **Darren Millar:** Okay. That's fine.

[399] **Lynne Neagle:** —and then consider how we go forward.

[400] Okay. Paper to note 5, then, is from the Cabinet Secretary for Education, further information on the performance framework for the education improvement grant.

[401] Paper to note 6 is further information from the Minister for lifelong learning on healthcare guidance and information on individual development

plans.

[402] **Darren Millar:** Can I come in on that as well, Chair?

[403] **Lynne Neagle:** Yes.

[404] **Darren Millar:** Obviously, I welcome the publication of the code, but I am very concerned about the timeline on the publication of the guidance on healthcare needs. It says March 2017. That's after the date by which we're supposed to have completed our work, isn't it?

[405] **Lynne Neagle:** Yes, it is in March. Yes.

[406] **Darren Millar:** I think that's unacceptable, Chair. I think we ought to write back to the Minister and ask for this to be made available, even if it's privately with this committee, prior to the conclusion of our work.

[407] **Lynne Neagle:** Okay. Everybody happy to do that? Yes. Okay.

[408] Paper to note 8: a further letter from the Minister for Lifelong Learning and Welsh Language regarding the Council for Wales of Voluntary Youth Services. Happy to note that? Okay.

12:14

**Cynnig o dan Reol Sefydlog 17.42 i Benderfynu Gwahardd y Cyhoedd
o'r Cyfarfod**

**Motion under Standing Order 17.42 to Resolve to Exclude the Public
from the Meeting**

Cynnig:

Motion:

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

accordance with Standing Order 17.42(ix).

Cynigiwyd y cynnig.

Motion moved.

[409] **Lynne Neagle:** Item 5, then, is a motion under Standing Order 17.42 to resolve to exclude the public for the remainder of the meeting. Is everybody content? Thank you very much.

Derbyniwyd y cynnig.

Motion agreed.

Daeth rhan gyhoeddus y cyfarfod i ben am 12:14.

The public part of the meeting ended at 12:14.