

Children, Young People and Education (CYPE) Committee Inquiry into Teachers' Professional Learning and Education

I would like to thank the Committee for undertaking an inquiry into Teachers' Professional Learning and Education in Wales including:

- (i) Arrangements for continuing professional development of the current workforce.
- (ii) The role of initial teacher education.
- (iii) The sufficiency of the future workforce.

This consultation has provided an opportunity to further explore specific professional learning issues initially raised in the context of the Successful Futures Inquiry.

I have provided a written response to your letter dated 21 February, raising consultation issues focused on Key Stage 4 Performance Measures and incentives for prospective teachers.

I am committed to providing opportunities for all education practitioners to grow, develop and recognise excellence in order to manage the challenges of education reform including a new curriculum and an improved system of ITE.

While we have identified initial professional learning priorities to prepare the profession for the new curriculum including digital, leadership and assessment for learning, it is not possible to fully predict future requirements at this stage.

I accept the recommendation in the recent OECD report that we continue to develop a National Approach to Professional Learning across all career stages, that builds capacity for the implementation of the new curriculum.

We are focused on what we need to do now to face current challenges and also to address emerging pedagogies to realise the new curriculum and support the transition to the self improving system, so we are equipped to be responsive to future professional learning priorities.

Written and oral consultation responses submitted at this stage have highlighted a range of key professional learning themes, which I have addressed in the attached evidence paper.

I look forward in considering emerging findings in relation to this inquiry in light of ongoing oral evidence sessions and working with you to constructively challenge the development of the national approach to professional learning at key points in the reform journey.

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Consistent Professional Learning Approach/Workforce Planning Model

Background

We have come a long way on our professional learning journey to deliver education reform in Wales. To successfully deliver Qualified for Life priorities we have remained focused on establishing firm professional learning foundations, building on the success of our national approach to implement the Foundation Phase, identified within Successful Futures.

2012/13 signalled a step change in the Welsh Government's approach to developing the new GCSE's, focused on principles of co-design and co-construction, working with the regions and with our most effective schools. In 2014, the government continued to work with the regions and partners to develop a national professional learning approach to support the transition to the Literacy and Numeracy Framework. Recognising that shaping professional learning solutions with the profession to implement Successful Futures, would be crucial.

In 2015, the government appointed a national network of pioneer schools. During the first 18 months, the network has focused on immediate professional learning priorities including digital, leadership and assessment for learning. As a key element in our work to raise standards in the learning and teaching of STEM subjects (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics), I have established National Networks for Excellence in Mathematics (NNEM) and in Science and Technology (NNEST) to provide new development opportunities for practitioners and access to the latest research and expert advice.

In 2016, we launched the review of the professional teaching and leadership standards. In light of the current consultation, the new standards will provide the backdrop for future professional learning reform.

Since 2016, we have been working to formalise a national professional learning approach, with an increased focus on priorities aligned with the self improving system, supported by our ongoing engagement with OECD. Our future vision is already progressing at pace, work is well underway with our pioneers to progress many of the professional learning themes highlighted within the Chief Inspector's Annual Report including digital priorities and creating a professional learning culture in schools.

A national approach to professional learning to support the Digital Competency Framework is on track for a September launch. This approach has been tried and tested by digital and professional learning pioneers to provide a continuum to embed the DCF. We are also one of four countries leading on international research led by OECD to transform schools into learning organisations. Pioneer schools are leading this innovative project, working with international colleagues to develop a 'Made in Wales' SLO Model.

Inviting OECD to review of our reform journey at regular intervals in 2014 and 2016, has provided an opportunity to identify the underlying strengths and future challenges for the Welsh Education System.

OECD Review of Welsh Education Reform Journey

I accept the recent OECD recommendation that we need to continue to develop a National Approach to Professional Learning across all career stages that builds capacity, begins in ITE and is embedded in the Self Improving School System and in evidence-based research for all practitioners. This includes a strong focus on building teachers' formative assessment and differentiated teaching skills.

OECD highlighted that Wales will need a different type of teaching professional in future; one who understands the 'why' and the 'how' of teaching as well as the 'what'.

There is a vast amount of professional learning activity being designed and delivered across Wales. I am focused on implementing a clear methodology for professional learning based around:

- Reflective practice
- Effective use of data and research evidence
- Effective collaboration
- Coaching and mentoring

The approach to professional learning and the new curriculum are being developed in tandem to ensure that immediate and emerging professional learning requirements are taken forward in a planned and structured way.

The consultation response submitted by EAS consortium on behalf of the four regions is testament to the high level of commitment and significant investment across Wales to work towards establishing a national approach.

Regional Professional Learning Action Plans and a National Successful Futures Implementation Plan demonstrate the extensive range of professional learning programmes currently being developed and delivered by consortia in partnership with pioneers to enhance provision across the career development milestones on a national basis. We recognise that the next 12-18 months will be critical in formalising the national approach to professional learning in readiness for the launch of a fully integrated national approach by September 2018.

Quality Assuring Professional Learning Provision/Accreditation

I want practitioners to set their own professional expectation, which will enable them to investigate, develop and share best practice via a wide range of appropriate professional learning activities. It is for this reason that I do not currently envisage a situation where one independent body (the EWC) should be given the responsibility for determining whether professional learning is quality assured, for the entire education workforce.

Welsh Government is in discussion with Estyn to commission a national thematic review focused on the quality of emerging professional learning provision to equip practitioners to embed the new curriculum. To continually review the quality and impact of professional learning provision developed in partnership with pioneers, regional consortia have commissioned a range of internal/external evaluations including thematic reviews of pioneer engagement and cluster working, professional learning impact assessments and an internal evaluation of professional learning hubs.

In light of emerging findings, consortia are working to refine the national approach to reduce duplication and provide enhanced opportunities for accreditation in partnership with HEIs. All consortia regions are hosting and co-funding work with schools to enable access to accredited post-graduate programmes through HE partners, ranging from post graduate certificate level work in a range of specialisms ranging from equity in education or leadership through, to full Masters qualifications and research at doctorate level.

Developing the wider education workforce

Welsh Government is committed to providing opportunities for all education practitioners to grow, develop and recognise excellence to implement Successful Futures.

FE institutions are responsible for securing professional learning for their own staff. Welsh Government has commissioned a number of initiatives to support professional learning in this sector, aligned to policy priorities and particular areas of need. The Professional Learning Passport will be available to FE registrants. The recent EWC workforce survey will inform the development of future FE professional learning initiatives.

Professor Bill Lucas is currently facilitating a group of stakeholders from FE and Work Based Learning to develop professional standards from October 2017. Further work will be undertaken during the next 6 months to develop professional standards for learning support workers in FE colleges.

We are working with consortia to consider how an All Wales professional learning approach could be developed to allow school learning support staff to enhance their learning and development using a range of options including courses to joint team to team working which will include how the professional learning passport can be used to record such activity. We are also working with consortia to explore what further development opportunities can be provided to practitioners with the HLTA status.

From April 2017 Youth Workers and Youth Support Workers are required to register with the EWC. Registration will strengthen their professional status, providing access to the Professional Learning Passport. There will also be real opportunities to bring all education practitioners together through CPD.

One of the themes coming out of the Supply Model Taskforce report and recommendations is providing additional professional learning support for supply teachers. We are working with consortia to progress this work strand, to determine how all supply teachers specifically those on short term placements and newly qualified teachers can engage in regular professional learning. We will also work with supply agencies to encourage them to offer a minimum core learning programme.

Leadership

Following my announcement to launch the National Academy of Educational Leadership in November, further work is being undertaken to develop the broad underpinning principals. Critically, the Academy will ensure equity of access to the highest quality leadership development. The initial focus will include routes to

headship and supporting new and practising head teachers. The Academy will also encapsulate leadership at all levels of the Welsh Education system.

The development of the Academy is an important step forward, alongside our new professional teaching standards, reforming Initial Teacher Education, and curriculum reform, in our collaborative approach to leadership development.

Leadership is one of the five dimensions in the draft professional standards currently out for consultation, recognising the leadership capacity of all. The new standards will strengthen routes to headship by reinforcing teachers' understanding of leadership; through building confidence and effectiveness in leadership; and by supporting improved progression arrangements so that teachers do not perceive barriers to senior leadership roles.

Funding/time

A £5.6 million Professional Learning funding allocation was awarded to regional consortia during 2016-17 to support the work of professional learning pioneers and enhance consortia capacity to develop the national approach. Funding streams were aligned to core professional learning priorities focused on digital, leadership and assessment for learning.

The Government has allocated a further £5.85 million to fund this work during 2017-18 and will continue to provide the necessary resources required to ensure delivery throughout the development period and beyond.

This year, I have also increased funding for Professional Learning pioneer schools from £7,500 per school, per term, to £10,000 per school per term. This will ensure that these pioneers are afforded the opportunities to work in tandem with our Curriculum and Digital pioneer schools.

In addition to the funding that I have directly allocated for the Professional Learning Pioneer network, I have committed an additional £100million over the Assembly term to drive up school standards, which includes enhanced funding to support the transition to a self improving system and to specifically support Welsh and Digital professional learning developments.

The Education Improvement Grant (EIG) also provides funding to support practitioners professional learning and development to improve standards of teaching, learning and leadership in the classroom.

Inset days are important in supporting effective teaching, learning and assessment. It is important to remember that teachers in Wales are granted 5 inset days by virtue of the School Teachers Pay and Conditions Document and these will continue to be made available. These 5 days should be sufficient for all schools to undertake any necessary training, planning and professional development for teachers.

Engagement/Capacity

Can I begin by stating that participating in professional learning is a primary responsibility of every individual and its purpose is to develop expertise and confidence. I am not going to dictate what professional learning a practitioner should

undertake, because everyone is different and has different requirements, but what I will state is that it has to be collaborative, coherent and research-led; ultimately benefiting the practitioner and all our learners.

The Professional Learning Passport provides practitioners with a tool to empower them to reflect and identify their own professional learning needs to develop and deepen their practice at all stages of their career. The Passport will be the linchpin to continuous professional learning. Over time the PLP will be expected to evolve as EWC receive feedback from users and stakeholders. The PLP will be required to reflect evolving practitioner needs to meet the demands of the new curriculum.

At the root of current reforms is our goal of developing a self-improving system. That is a deliberate step away from the top-down approach of the past, where the Government directs, instructs and sanctions, to one where it provides strategic leadership, facilitation and support.

There has been a significant investment by all consortia regions to develop capacity to support the transition to a school led system through networks, triads and mentors to support school to school working focused on practitioner inquiry and joint practice development.

The new professional standards reflect the commitment to continuous improvement and collaboration, by supporting practitioners to strive for sustained excellent practice from initial training through to school leadership. The new standards will set the bar to ensure they have the skills, knowledge and behaviours necessary to develop leadership capacity at all levels

The Estyn consultation response clearly positively reflected that increasingly, schools are developing internal capacity by supporting their staff to become facilitators of school to school working, providing rich opportunities for facilitators to develop their own leadership skills.

Well-being

Our vision is for a truly inclusive education system in Wales; where every child is supported to achieve their potential. Inclusion is not just about specific learner groups – it is about an equitable system that puts the learner at the heart of everything it does.

At the heart of our inclusive education system should be the well-being of a child. We know that children with higher levels of emotional, behavioural, social, and school well-being, on average, have higher levels of academic achievement and are more engaged in school. We want every child to be emotionally and physically ready to learn. We will therefore be adding well-being as a fifth objective in the next iteration of Qualified for Life. It was implicit before, but now it will be made explicit. Work on the high level design of the Health and Well-being Area of Learning and Experience began in January. Initial workshops are considering the scope of the AoLE, relationship with the four purposes, relevant experience and links with other AoLEs

We know that children and young people who experience Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are more likely to perform poorly in school. I have therefore agreed to jointly fund a centre of expertise on Adverse Childhood Experiences, the ACE hub with Public Health Wales. From an Education perspective, I want to ensure that all practitioners are ACE-informed and are equipped to support our very vulnerable children and young people, in the classroom and as part of the wider whole school approach to wellbeing.

Additional Learning Needs

Currently both ITE provision and wider CPD for teachers is intended to enable teachers to meet the needs of all learners. As part of the ALNET Bill and the associated transformation programme, we are working up a bespoke programme to build capacity in the workforce to support learners with ALN.

In particular, Welsh Government is looking to invest in the training and development of the new Additional Learning Needs Coordinator Role. This is likely to include development of a Masters level programme in ALN. Wider workforce development will be delivered to both teachers and support staff. The intention will be to disseminate effective strategies for learners with high incidence ALN.

Welsh

The specific needs of Welsh medium teaching and learning will be fully considered as the arrangements for the curriculum, including assessment and professional learning, are developed. Professional learning for Welsh will ensure that teachers have the Welsh language skills and methodology needed to make the radical changes to Welsh language teaching and learning a reality.

Support may include opportunities for secondments in Welsh-medium schools and settings, mentoring and school-to-school support, in addition to sharing effective practice through primary and secondary liaison, Welsh-medium and English-medium links and through using and supplementing research. The new Welsh Language Strategy will address how we will support this – the work of developing the strategy and related targets is currently ongoing so it is not appropriate for me to provide details on specific aspects of the Strategy at this point.

The Welsh-language Sabbatical Scheme offers intensive periods of training for teachers, teaching assistants and FE lecturers. We aim to significantly expand on the Scheme over the coming years to enable more teachers, classroom assistants and FE lecturers than ever before to benefit from the training on offer. New models for both the delivery of the Scheme as well as arrangements to release practitioners from their schools are currently being considered.

As well as gaining an understanding of the Welsh language skills of the workforce, the workforce survey undertaken by the EWC will provide a geographic breakdown of the workforce – highlighting where there is sufficient supply of teachers and where we need greater capacity – so that our support and training programmes can be targeted accordingly.

INITIAL TEACHER EDUCATION

Background

In March 2014, Professor John Furlong was appointed as Initial Teacher Education and Training (ITET) Adviser for Wales. He was asked to consider and scope the changes that are needed to bring about improvements to ITET in Wales following a review of the quality and consistency of teacher training undertaken by Professor Ralph Tabberer in 2013¹. *Teaching Tomorrow's Teachers*² was published in March 2015 and since then Welsh Government has worked with Professor Furlong and other independent experts to support the reform of ITE in Wales.

Accreditation Criteria

The draft accreditation criteria were developed by Professor Furlong as Chair of the Teacher Education Accreditation Task & Finish Group and went for public consultation 26 September to 14 November 2016.

The responses to the consultation were generally either in line with or identical to the responses that were subsequently submitted to the CYP Committee in relation to the draft accreditation criteria.

Following consideration of the ITE accreditation consultation responses³ and an engagement event with Professor Furlong and HEIs on 13 January, the draft criteria were amended. The final document *Criteria for the accreditation of initial teacher education programmes in Wales: Teaching Tomorrow's Teachers* was published 15 March along with a Written Ministerial Statement from the Cabinet Secretary for Education.

The new accreditation criteria make clear the requirements for ITE in Wales:

- An increased role for schools
- A clearer role for universities
- Joint ownership of the ITE programme
- Structured opportunities to link school and university learning
- The centrality of research

The accreditation criteria recognise the value and the difference that a truly collaborative ITE system can make, where HEI's and schools work in genuine partnership. In 'Improving schools in Wales: an OECD perspective' 2014, the OECD stated that Wales needs to 'continue the ongoing reform and improvement of initial teacher training and engage schools to offer trainees placements'. The criteria set out a model of ITE Partnerships whereby 'lead partner schools' and HEIs have their equal part to play in offering the balance of theoretical and practical input to ensure a high quality experience for our future teachers. These partnerships, with the support of the consortia, will extend to the initial development and ongoing quality assurance of their ITE programmes, staff training, including access to and involvement in international research, as well as the partnerships wider resources.

¹ <http://gov.wales/topics/educationandskills/publications/wagreviews/review-of-initial-teacher-training-in-wales/?lang=en>

² <http://gov.wales/topics/educationandskills/publications/wagreviews/teaching-tomorrows-teachers/?lang=en>

³ <https://consultations.gov.wales/consultations/initial-teacher-education-accreditation>

Role of the EWC

Empowering the Education Workforce Council (EWC) to accredit individual ITE programmes, through the establishment of the Initial School Teacher Training Committee (“the Board”) will enable more specific consideration of how the programmes will raise the quality of ITE provision – attracting the right people with the right skills, qualifications and an aptitude for teaching, to enter the profession.

The appointment of a highly credible, high-calibre Chair and two Deputy Chairs to the Board will ensure that arrangements are in place to facilitate a Quality Assured accreditation process with the necessary rigour and support to ensure that all future ITE programmes are thoroughly and appropriately reviewed.

The public appointments process for the Chair and Deputy Chairs went live 6 March and will close on 31 March. Following shortlisting a final decision will be made by the Cabinet Secretary in April in readiness for the start of the appointments in June 2017.

ITE Expert Forum

We have established an ITE Expert Forum, chaired by Professor John Furlong, to support the ITE partnerships to meet requirements for accreditation. The remit of the ITE Expert Forum will also include the development of the pedagogy of ITE and exploring ITE partnerships as learning organisations.

Ten ITE Partnerships submitted a statement of intent to offer ITE programmes under the new arrangements. The ITE Expert Forum considered all Statements of Intent and conducted face to face meetings over January with all that have submitted a Statement, giving early feedback to inform next steps.

The OECD

To support the centrality of research to ITE reform we welcomed experts from across the world to Wales. The OECD organised an international workshop, working with us on “Strengthening capacity for evidence-based, research informed pedagogical practice in Wales”. Workshops took place in Cardiff 15 to 17 March 2017.

The workshops formed part of our work to build greater capacity for research in teacher education in Wales, both at the school level and the training provider level. The OECD assembled a group of international researchers to assist us to develop a Framework that provides a practical delivery structure around strong evidence based pedagogical principles for ITE programmes.

OECD workshops and an evolving Framework will support ITE Partnerships to build a vibrant learning community, working co-operatively to support student teachers to develop research knowledge and skills, both as consumers of research and as participants in it. This is critical in supporting student teachers to become competent, thoughtful, reflective and innovative practitioners who are committed to providing high-quality teaching and learning for all pupils/students.

The OECD in their *The Welsh Education Reform Journey: A Rapid Policy Assessment report*⁴ advised the Welsh Government to “Continue with the initial teacher education reforms, including the promotion of strong partnerships between initial teacher education institutions and schools.”

Forward Timeline

Whilst new programmes of ITE will be delivered from September 2019, I expect to see substantial progress now. My ITE Expert Forum has provided detailed feedback to Partnerships following their expressions of interest. Next steps are for:

- partnerships to ensure that ITE programmes have gained academic validation before they are submitted to the EWC Board for professional accreditation
- partnerships to submit their programmes to the EWC Board for accreditation by 1st December 2017
- the EWC Board to establish whether programmes offer relevant professional preparation for teaching ensuring student teachers shall meet the Professional teaching and leadership Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) standards
- the EWC Board to inform Partnerships of their decision in June 2018 and new ITE programmes will be marketed to prospective students from summer 2018.

From May 2017 the ITE Expert Forum will work with schools and HEIs to develop alternative routes into teaching to ensure the recruitment of high calibre graduates into teaching as well as career changers. The forum will ensure the fundamental principles of ITE quality assurance and accreditation will apply appropriately to all forms of initial teacher education including employment based routes.

In addition, following consideration of the Diamond review the forum will explore options for a 2-year Post Graduate and 4-year Undergraduate ITE, considering implications for Masters level learning. However, as stated in the 2014 OECD report any decision around this should not, and will not be rushed.

⁴ <https://www.oecd.org/edu/The-Welsh-Education-Reform-Journey.pdf>