

## **Finance Committee**

### **FIN(3) 08-08 (p4 - to note) Inquiry into funding of Foundation Phase: correspondence received**

**Date: Thursday 22 May 2008**

**Time: 9.30 – 11.30am**

**Venue: Committee Room 3**

#### **Purpose of paper**

1. For Members to consider the correspondence received by the Chair of the Finance Committee regarding the funding of the Foundation Phase:

- a) Letter from Jenny Randerson AM to Chair, Finance Committee dated 22 April 2008 – Annex A
- b) Letter from Iwan Guy, NAHT Cymru to Chair, Finance Committee dated 25 April– Annex B
- c) Email from Karen Lawrence , Head Teacher of Llanfaes School to Chair, Finance Committee received by email on 29 April 2008 - Annex C
- d) Letter from Huw Evans, Chair of Governors, Eglwys Newydd Primary School to Chair, Finance Committee dated 1 May 2008 - Annex D
- e) 2008 Further email from Karen Lawrence , Head Teacher of Llanfaes School to Chair, Finance Committee received by email on 9 May 2008– Annex E
- f) Letter from D.A. Griffiths, Head Teacher, Blaendulais Primary School to Chair, Finance Committee dated 14 May 2008 – Annex F

#### **Committee Service**

Jenny Randerson AM  
Welsh Liberal Democrats  
Cardiff Central



Cynulliad National  
Cenedlaethol Assembly for  
Cymru Wales

Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff, CF99 1NA

☎ 2089 8355

Alun Cairns AM  
Chair  
Finance Committee

22nd April 2008.

Dear Alun,

I am writing to you in your capacity as Chair of the Finance Committee to request that we undertake a brief investigation into the funding of the Foundation Phase, along similar lines to the investigation that we carried out into the Foot and Mouth crisis.

Yours Sincerely,

JENNY RANDESON  
Welsh Liberal Democrat Assembly Member for Cardiff Central

Alun Cairns,  
Chair Finance Committee  
National Assembly for Wales  
CARDIFF Bay,  
Cardiff  
CF99 1NA

25<sup>th</sup> April 2008



**re: Foundation Phase Funding**

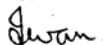
You will, no doubt, be aware of the strong feelings amongst Head Teachers regarding the implementation of the Foundation Phase in September 2008. The major concern is lack of adequate funding to support the introduction of this exciting, flagship development in education in Wales.

It is accepted that the funding is insufficient for a full roll-out as envisaged. The promised and accepted staffing ratio of 1:8 is no longer statutory. I have noted with interest your comments in the recent debate tabled by the Liberal Democrats; *"However, after support has been won for a policy and the legislation has been passed, implementation is key to its successful roll-out throughout Wales. This is, sadly, where the Welsh Assembly Government is failing badly."*

Such are the concerns of the NAHT, I am requesting that the Finance Committee, as a matter of urgency, scrutinise the funding process by which the level of funding allocated was determined for the Foundation Phase. The method of calculating the required funding would appear to be flawed, and possibly based on incorrect information.

The NAHT is fully committed to the Foundation Phase, but the lack of funding is jeopardising its implementation. I eagerly await your reply

Yn gywir,



**Iwan Guy**  
**Cyfarwyddyd Dros Dro**  
**NAHT Cymru**

*Yn hapus i gwerdd unhybryd i drefod hwn*

c.c. Jane Hutt, Minister for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning & Skills  
Kirsty Williams AM

Annex C

**Email received 29 April 2008**

I am the Headteacher of Llanfaes in Brecon. I am relieved that the issue of funding is finally being investigated. Powys Headteachers are frustrated to distraction by the position we are in. I implore you to direct the scrutiny committee to reach a speedy conclusion. School budgets, staffing organisation, employment needs ( I hope!) and training needs are all at standstill - yet we have only until half term to instigate redundancies or appointments under Employment law. If this is not the case then the FP will not be introduced until Jan 2009! Our children are the victims in this, it is an apolitical issue. If I can be of any help please do not hesitate to contact me. 01874 623326 or via e mail. I have also written to Ms Hutt and have been in regular contact with Kirsty Williams. The actions of Headteachers are unprecidented on this matter, which must speak volumes.

Yours sincerely,

Karen Lawrence.



Alan Cairns AM  
Chair of Finance Committee  
National Assembly for Wales  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1NA

Eglwys Newydd Primary School,  
Glan-y-Nant Road, Whitchurch,  
Cardiff CF14 1AP  
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email: schooladmin@eglwysnewyddprm.cardiff.sch.uk

1<sup>st</sup> May 2008

Dear Mr Cairns

I enclose copy of letter sent to the Minister for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills about the reaction of the governing body of Eglwys Newydd Primary School to projected funding for the Foundation Phase. In view of the recent announcement of your committee's enquiry into the cost and funding of the Foundation Phase, you seemed to an obvious candidate for inclusion as a copy recipient.

Yours sincerely

  
**Huw Evans**  
Chair of Governors



HEADTEACHER: Mrs M. Chatters

Annex E

**Email received 9 May 2008**

Dear Mr Cairns,

I recently e mailed you regarding the lack of funding for the FP and feel I must comment again after the Minister's statement this week.

Obviously, £5 million is to be welcomed if you are in a Pilot or Early Start school as it will enable them to continue their excellent work. However, it's impact on the majority of schools can only be marginal. In Powys we only have 2 pilot schools thus removing them from the numbers to be funded out of our initial allocation is going to be minimal. Having spoken to our Finance Department today they do not actually know how the £5 million is being allocated throughout Wales and can not therefore support schools in setting budgets still - though we are in the middle of May. As you can imagine this is creating uncertainty and anxiety amongst staff.

If the extra money has been found from within the Education Budget which area will now be reduced? Could schools now face a double impact in that FP is not funded adequately and provision in another aspect is also reduced?

The concerns I raised in my last e mail have not been lessened through this announcement. The reality is that I cannot implement the FP as it should be, as every child has the right to, from September 08. If the funding issue is so horrendous this year what are we to expect next year? It really does not bear thinking about.

I am on the Primary Catchment Heads committee in Powys, and at our meeting the issues were unanimously agreed upon. FP is a wonderful initiative, proven through studies abroad and in Welsh schools. The situation we now face is divisive, with some schools being able to offer the experiential learning fully, others to varying degrees. All children deserve the best we can give them. Only when the Minister acknowledges this can we move forward.

My writing of this e mail was interrupted as I had to take delivery of a parcel. On opening it I found it contained booklets 'Learning in the Foundation Phase - play, learn, grow' A guide for parents and carers. It emphasises why educationalists are so supportive of the FP, exactly what I want for the children in my school. On a skim reading I have noticed the phrase '.. the best way to learn these skills is by interacting with other children, peers and adults'. It does not state how many adults or how frequently they are to do it in the underfunded schools needless-to-say!

I am running a FP awareness afternoon for parents next Thursday - how do I respond to their obvious questions re ratios when asked? Will they feel their children are being 'short-changed'?

As you can tell, I remain gravely concerned about the future of FP in my school and Wales. The disservice to our children is astounding. Again I urge the Scrutiny committee to stand up for our children, allow schools to do what they so want to do - provide the highest standard of learning for all of our children.

Karen Lawrence

Annex F

## BLAENDULAIS PRIMARY SCHOOL

Head Teacher:  
D A Griffiths BEd Hons

Seven Sisters  
NEATH  
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Tel & Fax: 01639 700261

E-mail:- [headteacher.blaendulais.pri@npt.gov.uk](mailto:headteacher.blaendulais.pri@npt.gov.uk)

14 May 2008

Mr A Cairns AM  
Member for South Wales West Region  
Welsh Assembly Government  
Welsh Assembly  
Cardiff

Dear Mr. Cairns

I am writing to express my concerns regarding the funding to be made available by the Welsh Assembly Government for the Foundation Phase, when it is introduced in Primary Schools in Wales from September 2008. In spite of the recent announcement of further funding, for this initiative, by the education minister, I feel that school will still face a shortfall in funding in order to comply with the requirement of having a ratio of one adult to eight pupils. School will require two teaching assistants each costing £23645.69 per annum, in addition to the class teacher, to meet this ratio and will be unable to fund them with the present level of funding available.

I understand that the Finance Scrutiny Committee of the Assembly will be meeting on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2008 and I am seeking your support in getting the level of Foundation Phase Funding increased to the appropriate level in order to fund the required staff

Yours sincerely

*D A Griffiths*

D A Griffiths  
Head Teacher



Schools Curriculum Award



INVESTORS IN  
PEOPLE