

## Education and Lifelong Learning Committee

### Addendum to Ministerial Report

We have given a commitment to review testing and assessment at Key Stages 2 and 3. I intend that this should begin before the recess, and that it should be completed by early next year. I think the Committee will find it helpful to be briefed on the broad parameters.

ACCAC has already been remitted to submit by April 2004 consolidated advice to the Assembly Government about the future development of the school curriculum and its assessment arrangements. Taking account of that, and mindful of the scale and significance of what is ahead, I shall be establishing a small Reference and Review Group to complement the Authority's own remit. It will contribute to and enlarge upon that work as necessary, and on a mutually effective basis. It will be independently Chaired.

The Group will consider whether, and if so how best to adjust the relevant assessment arrangements for the future, in the interests of pupils and productive lifelong learning, drawing on expert international evidence. I want it to consider proposals for the way ahead so that all stakeholders can be assured that information on progress over developing educational standards in Wales is rigorously based and capable of international comparison. I want it to make suggestions as to how high standards of teacher assessment can be maintained throughout Wales; about how soundly based quantitative data should be used to the benefit of teaching and learning; and about how assessment should be used to enable the whole child develop and flourish.

I am especially concerned that parents and pupils should be given genuine opportunity to have their voices and concerns heard. I know that working with ACCAC, the group will see that this happens. I expect that the whole process will encompass;

- \* the nature and constituent elements of the assessment;
- \* the suitability of the current tests;
- \* the timing of current and future arrangements;
- \* the use and handling of necessary data; and

\* the impact that existing and prospective arrangements have on the

transition between primary and secondary schools.

I shall want the group to make appropriate arrangements for consultation with all interested stakeholders including employers, trade unions, LEAs and others in the statutory and voluntary sectors. It is obviously essential that the Group should draw on the expertise of Estyn and teaching professionals throughout Wales.

I shall also ask the group to make recommendations, and to publish its report to me. I shall ensure that the Committee is kept fully informed of progress and that, subject to the Chair's agreement, Members have the opportunity to comment on the results.