



**Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru
Y Pwyllgor Addysg, Dysgu Gydol Oes a Sgiliau**

**The National Assembly for Wales
The Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills
Committee**

**Dydd Mercher, 3 Mai 2006
Wednesday, 3 May 2006**

Cynnwys
Contents

- 3 Cyflwyniad, Ymddiheuriadau, Dirprwyon a Datgan Buddiannau
Introduction, Apologies, Substitutions and Declarations of Interest
- 4 Adroddiad y Gweinidog
Minister's Report
- 19 Rhagolwg ar Is-ddeddfwriaeth
Secondary Legislation Forward Look
- 19 Monitro Argymhellion Adroddiad y Pwyllgor ar Anghenion Addysgol Arbennig
Rhan 1—Adnabod ac Ymyrryd yn Gynnar
Monitoring the Recommendations of the Committee's Report into Special
Educational Needs Part 1—Early Identification and Intervention
- 24 Cylch Gorchwyl—Adolygiad o Anghenion Addysgol Arbennig Rhan 3: Pontio
Terms of Reference—Review into Special Educational Needs Part 3: Transition
- 27 Hyfforddiant Cychwynnol Athrawon—Adolygiad Furlong
Initial Teacher Training—Furlong Review
- 46 Blaenraglen Waith Strategol
Strategic Forward Work Programme

Cofnodir y trafodion hyn yn yr iaith y llefarwyd hwy ynnddi yn y pwyllgor. Yn ogystal,
cynhwysir cyfieithiad Saesneg o gyfraniadau yn y Gymraeg.

These proceedings are reported in the language in which they were spoken in the committee.
In addition, an English translation of Welsh speeches is included.

Aelodau Cynulliad yn bresennol: Peter Black (Cadeirydd), Christine Chapman, Jeff Cuthbert, Jane Davidson (y Gweinidog dros Addysg, Dysgu Gydol Oes a Sgiliau), William Graham, Irene James, Janet Ryder, Owen John Thomas.

Swyddogion yn bresennol: Joanest Jackson, Cynghorydd Cyfreithiol y Pwyllgor; Alun Huws, Hyfforddiant Cychwynnol Athrawon; Alan Lansdown, Pennaeth yr Is-adran Anghenion Ychwanegol a Chynhwysiant; Steve Marshall, Cyfarwyddwr Addysg, Dysgu Gydol Oes a Sgiliau; Elizabeth Taylor, Cyfarwyddwr, Grŵp Plant ac Ysgolion; Mair Watkins, Pennaeth Anghenion Addysgol Arbennig a Chynhwysiant.

Eraill yn bresennol: Geraint Davies, Cymdeithas Genedlaethol yr Ysgolfeistri ac Undeb yr Athrawesau; Dr Philip Dixon, Cyfarwyddwr, Cymdeithas yr Athrawon a'r Darlithwyr Cymru; Dr Heledd Hayes, Swyddog Addysg, Undeb Cenedlaethol yr Athrawon Cymru; Dafydd Morgan, Cymdeithas Genedlaethol yr Ysgolfeistri ac Undeb yr Athrawesau; Rhys Williams, Swyddog Cyfathrebu, Ymgyrchu a Gwleidyddia, Undeb Cenedlaethol yr Athrawon, Cymru.

Gwasanaeth y Pwyllgor: Karin Phillips, Clerc; Ruth Hatton, Dirprwy Glerc.

Assembly Members in attendance: Peter Black (Chair), Christine Chapman, Jeff Cuthbert, Jane Davidson (Minister for Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills), William Graham, Irene James, Janet Ryder, Owen John Thomas.

Officials in attendance: Joanest Jackson, Legal Adviser to the Committee; Alun Huws, Initial Teacher Training; Alan Lansdown, Head of Additional Needs and Inclusion Division; Steve Marshall, Director for Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills; Elizabeth Taylor, Director, Children and Schools Group; Mair Watkins, Head of Special Educational Needs and Inclusion.

Others in attendance: Geraint Davies, National Association of Schoolmasters and Union of Women Teachers; Dr Philip Dixon, Director, Association of Teachers and Lecturers Cymru; Dr Heledd Hayes, Education Officer, National Union of Teachers Cymru; Dafydd Morgan, National Association of Schoolmasters and Union of Women Teachers; Rhys Williams, Political Communications and Campaigns Officer, National Union of Teachers Cymru.

Committee Service: Karin Phillips, Clerc; Ruth Hatton, Deputy Clerk.

*Dechreuodd y cyfarfod am 9.00 a.m.
The meeting began at 9.00 a.m.*

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

[1] **Peter Black:** Good morning. I welcome you all to the Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills Committee. I will just go through a few housekeeping announcements. In an emergency, ushers will indicate the nearest safe exit. Headsets are available for translation and amplification; for committee members, I believe it is channel 1. Microphones should come on automatically, but I would be grateful if Members could pause for five seconds before speaking to ensure that the light has come on; otherwise we may lose the first few words of your contribution for the record, which would be a tragedy and we would not want that to happen. I ask everyone to switch off any mobile phones or BlackBerrys.

[2] Are there any apologies? I see that there are none. In that case, I invite Members to

make declarations of interest under Standing Order No. 4.6.

[3] **Jeff Cuthbert:** With regard to item 5 on the review into special educational needs, I am a governor of Trinity Fields Special School in Ystrad Mynach.

[4] **Peter Black:** Thank you. Does anyone else have anything to declare? I see that no-one does.

9.01 a.m.

Adroddiad y Gweinidog Minister's Report

[5] **Peter Black:** There are 10 items in the report, and I invite the Minister to make a brief introduction.

[6] **The Minister for Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills (Jane Davidson):** As usual, I am very pleased to present my report to committee. I was delighted to launch 'The Learning Country 2: Delivering the Promise' at the end of last term. Some tremendous successes have been achieved since the first report in 2001, but some real challenges remain, outlined in paragraph 1.7, if we are to meet our 'The Learning Country' goals by 2010. Many of those challenges are in relation to the achievements of our most disadvantaged young people. That is why we announced the Raising Attainment and Individual Standards in Education in Wales programme. My report sets out the purposes of the RAISE grant and the arrangements for its distribution and use by schools.

[7] The Assembly Government is committed to issuing the grant on a targeted basis, so that it can make a real difference to the life chances of pupils in schools that face the greatest challenges in terms of tackling disadvantage. We could have made other choices: to give small amounts of funding to all schools, to focus on low-performing schools or to draw the eligibility criteria in another way, but we consider that the approach that we propose achieves the right balance between targeting and ensuring that the benefits are felt by a significant number of disadvantaged pupils. This is backed up by substantial evidence published in the last year. We will be working with local authorities in evaluating the use of the grant so that the lessons learnt and the good practice identified can be shared by all schools. I am happy to consider comments from Members and to deal with any queries about the scheme. We are working on the basis that local authorities and, through them, the schools, will be notified of the final arrangements next week, although the allocations will only be finalised when the Assembly has approved a motion transferring the funding for this grant into the education, lifelong learning and skills main expenditure group. That debate is due to take place before the end of this month, but that is a matter for the Business Minister and business managers.

[8] Following a recent visit to Wales by the Honourable Kenneth Tsekoa, Lesotho's Minister of Education and Training, I was invited on a reciprocal visit. This took place during the Assembly recess just before Easter, and I was accompanied by my private secretary and an official from our new practitioner division. The visit was designed in the main to enable me to strengthen links at ministerial level, to discuss and observe the six-month placement programme being piloted for teachers from Wales, and to look at its operation by Dolen Cymru, in conjunction with the British Council. During my stay, I was heartened by the very positive response to the teacher placement programme and the opportunities to discuss our respective education frameworks and possibilities for mutually beneficial links. Full details of the visit are included in a written statement that I made to the Assembly yesterday. The visit coincided with the launch of the programme by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Right Honourable Gordon Brown MP and the Secretary of State for International Development, the Right Honourable Hilary Benn MP, to provide funding of £8.5 billion over 10 years, through

agreements with poorer countries in Africa and elsewhere, to offer primary schooling for all. As you will see in the report, Lesotho is one of the first countries in Africa to deliver on the opportunity of free primary education. Details of the Government initiative are in a booklet published by the Treasury entitled 'Keeping our Promises: Delivering Education for All', copies of which I can provide for the committee if Members wish. Alongside other campaigns to bring education to the 100 million children worldwide who do not currently go to school, this is an important step towards meeting our commitments to the developing world. It is a programme that I am very happy to support.

[9] Later today, Christine and I will be launching our 14 to 19 action plan and guidance, which we considered at the last meeting. It will be accompanied by a DVD, spelling out the new opportunities for young people. Copies of all the materials will be made available to committee members.

[10] Yesterday, I was delighted to launch the 'Achieving Dyslexia Friendly Schools' pack with the British Dyslexia Association, and I was pleased that both Jeff Cuthbert and Janet Ryder were able to attend that launch. It is relevant to the later item looking at the Government response on special educational needs and how we ensure that schools are given more support in identifying special educational needs. We paid for the translation and distribution of these packs, and they will be made available to all schools. I encourage Members to have a look at a pack, because it is a high-quality, easy-to-read pack, as, I am sure that both Jeff and Janet will agree.

[11] **Peter Black:** The first item in the report is 'The Learning Country'. Are there any questions or points on that?

[12] **Irene James:** I apologise that I still sound like Minnie Mouse. I welcome the publication of 'The Learning Country 2' and the commitment to tackling the remaining challenges. With the greatest responsibility for the allocation of school funding falling on local government, how are you working to ensure that the remaining inequalities and disparities in educational outcomes are tackled and that they are targeted by all the available funding?

[13] **Jane Davidson:** It was interesting to notice in the chief inspector's annual report that Estyn inspects secondary schools each year where pupils' attainment in national tests or examinations are lower than in most other schools, and that many of those are in more disadvantaged areas. Estyn measures disadvantage through free school meals. In its annual report, which we considered previously in this committee, Estyn pointed out that some of these schools could benefit from extra funding and that some local education authorities do not do enough to ensure that their school funding formula recognises the additional spending needs of the schools.

[14] We will come on to the RAISE programme in the second item, because I am sure that people will want to look at that, but that, in one way, is a direct response to the challenges that were laid in the Estyn report, and in reports from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation and others. However, Members will also remember that we have put in place a new statutory partnership between local government and schools over school improvement, which will come into place over the next year. We also have our new statutory partnership in Wales—another Wales-only provision—in terms of transition. Both of these are important in terms of ensuring that children are adequately and properly supported from the primary to the secondary sector. Several challenging areas around how we ensure that all children in Wales can benefit from a high-quality education are about how we deal with our most disadvantaged young people. Of course, some of those are looked-after children, and we have also picked that up in the RAISE agenda.

[15] **Peter Black:** We move to item 2, which is Raising Attainment and Individual Standards in Education.

[16] **Janet Ryder:** Everyone will welcome money that is targeted at those who are most disadvantaged, and to see this extra money being used in that way is certainly a good way forward. However, we may have to look at the mechanism that is being used to distribute this and the way in which the grant has been handled by the Minister. I see Irene nodding; she knows that there is not a secondary school in Islwyn that will receive any of this money. Some 60 per cent of the secondary schools in Caerphilly will not get anything.

[17] The Minister has made repeated reference to free school meals as being a good indicator. It is an economic indicator, but it is not an educational attainment indicator, and it is only one indicator. There are many other indicators that could have been taken. It is the kind of indicator that might work at a county level, but when it is taken down to an individual school level, it certainly proves to be problematic.

9.10 a.m.

[18] Look at the example of Rhyl High School, which takes children from the third most deprived ward in Wales, yet does not qualify because its canteen is too small, and therefore many young people do not register for their meals. Rhyl High School is only one example. Denbighshire local education authority has the lowest attainment target of any county—it came bottom of the key stage 3 assessments, yet only one of its secondary schools will benefit, and not many of its primary schools will benefit, because of the indicator that has been chosen. The problem with Rhyl High School is duplicated in many schools across Wales, and they have been excluded as a result.

[19] The Minister has talked about working in collaboration with local government, yet the way in which this scheme has been distributed will blow some local government plans right out of the water. They will not be able to continue. Wrexham local education authority had developed its plans and had seen many improvements in its schools. It had targeted money at five secondary schools, and it knew that its results from primary schools were improving. So, together with the headteachers, Wrexham had decided where best to concentrate the £3 million that had been made available for improving schools last year. Of those five secondary schools, two have been identified in the report to receive that money, but a number of Wrexham's primary schools have also been identified. That is not how the local LEA, in conjunction with its schools and headteachers, had decided to use the money, in improving the chances of all children in Wrexham.

[20] The information that went out to counties said that the Government's ambition will be to ensure that all young people benefit. Yet, the Minister has excluded those young people who receive school meals but who attend a school where fewer than 20 per cent of the pupils receive free school meals or attend a school with less than 50 pupils. I understand the rationale that has been given to local government—that schools with fewer than 50 pupils receive the small schools and rural schools initiative money—but that money was never meant for this scheme, Minister, and you know that. That money was meant to aid small schools to meet the many financial challenges that they face, and to help the heads to make the planning, preparation and assessments arrangements and to help them with other measures. The money was not meant for this scheme at all.

[21] I would be very interested to hear what the Minister thinks of the Welsh Local Government Association's response. While the WLGA has welcomed the scheme, it opened its letter with regret and considerable dismay at how this grant has been put out. It has not been distributed following consultation with local government and directors of education. I believe that Society of Local Authority Chief Executives and Senior Managers says that it is

concerned about the distribution being based on one indicator and overlooking other data sources that are relevant to educational performance. The Minister must say clearly what the aim of the grant is. If it is to raise educational performance, then surely we should be helping local government and, in consultation with it, distributing the grant in a way that will meet the targets that it has set for raising attainment. Never has a grant been distributed like this in Wales before. Never has a Minister identified the schools to which the grant will go and then put a figure on that amount of money. It is based on an indicator that is not a sound indicator of educational performance. I would like to hear justification from the Minister for excluding those many pupils—if she is going to stick to free school meals—who receive free school meals. Why has the Minister not consulted her colleagues in local government about this issue, and why has she overridden local plans in this way?

[22] **Peter Black:** William, do you have a question?

[23] **William Graham:** I would rather hear the Minister's response, if I may.

[24] **Peter Black:** I will be bringing other people in, but I will let you have a second bite of the cherry afterwards.

[25] **William Graham:** Just specifically then, although I appreciate that the grant had to be made quickly and I respect the responses that have been made, as a tangent to that, I ask the Minister whether she has done any research that suggested that she should place so much emphasis on free school meals on this occasion and whether there is a better way of distributing the grant, which I know that she has considered.

[26] **Peter Black:** Do you want to answer those two before I bring Jeff and Christine in?

[27] **Jane Davidson:** It might be useful since there are 12 questions.

[28] If you look at the written statement that we, as a Cabinet, made with the introduction of the grant, you will see that we demonstrate quite clearly, as we do in 'The Learning Country', that several written reports from other agencies, including the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, Estyn, which did a report on low-performing secondary schools, and the Fabian Society, and the Narrowing the Gap work carried out with Welsh local government, have identified that there has been insufficient focus in Wales on the most disadvantaged young people. That has meant that, although attainment in Wales has risen—and we are all very pleased about that across the piece—Wales has too large a number of young people who are not gaining qualifications and who are performing at the lowest level in terms of GCSEs, so that Wales's overall performance is being held back by exactly the group of people who we want to benefit from education: those who are most disadvantaged. All these external commentators have suggested that because we do not have a programme that is specifically focused on disadvantage, we have not addressed that sufficiently. Those are key challenges that we laid out in 'The Learning Country' and have been working with over the last two years in our development of 'The Learning Country' agenda, before we knew that we were going to have the substantial extra investment that has enabled us to put the programme in place.

[29] Janet says that no Minister before has had a programme where schools have been named, but I, along with all Cabinet colleagues in agreeing this programme—because it has been through the Assembly Cabinet, as this is not about an individual Minister's approach; this is about the Assembly Government's commitment to social justice—have looked at a set of mechanisms around how best we can utilise the additional funding coming to Wales. If we had just given an equal grant to every school, it would have been £7,000. If we had given an equal grant to every child eligible for free school meals, it would have been £156 per head. If we had looked at population flows in terms of the allocation of funding to the schools, I think

that it would have ended up—I seem to remember from previous discussions—as about £3,000 to about £20,000. The work on the previous £3 million grant has identified that it was not working because local authorities were not using it effectively, as they were always spreading it too widely and, therefore, it could not have sufficient impact. We, therefore, determined that if we are absolutely committed to dealing with these key challenges with our most disadvantaged young people, and knowing that education is a route out of poverty, we needed a mechanism that could sufficiently target and could also ensure that it was not just about schools but that local authorities were also engaged in the process. I am grateful to William for acknowledging that when the money came in, we needed to say quickly how we were going to get it out. However, at the end of the day, the Assembly makes the decision on the transfer of funding into this programme.

[30] It is important to say that if you look generally at what has come back, for example, from the Welsh Local Government Association, understandably, it represents the interests of all its Members, so it prefers a geographical distribution. However, this is not a distribution that follows geography; this distribution follows disadvantage, equally across Wales. The statisticians and experts working in the education department, as I said, looked at several mechanisms for being able to deal with this as effectively as possible. Initially, I was keen to look at the Welsh index of multiple deprivation, which works on the basis of ranking geographical areas, but, because it works according to geographical areas, it can only be used to look at schools on the basis of the overall level of deprivation in the area in which the school is located. It would not necessarily relate to the deprivation of the pupil population who come from a wider geographic area than the immediate area in which secondary schools are located.

9.20 a.m.

[31] We are looking at ways of using the Welsh index of multiple deprivation more effectively, but I would point out that Estyn and Ofsted used free school meals. We publish statistics because there is such a close link. As free school meals rise, educational attainment falls. We know that there is a very close link between the economic indicator and performance in schools. We also know, from the Narrowing the Gap work, that that link can be broken if there is targeted activity in terms of the schools themselves. We are absolutely focusing on the targeted activity that will be able to deliver.

[32] The eligibility of students, therefore, was based on the fact that free school meals in Wales currently operate at an average of around 18 per cent. So, in terms of targeting disadvantage, you had to have a higher level of input. Any targeting programme always has a line, but we have made sure, in terms of the statistical analysis—and figures have been crunched hundreds of times in relation to this issue—that we are working with the most up-to-date data. That is why the secondary school allocations have operated over three school years, in terms of the pupil level, annual, school-census data, because we have it for secondary schools. For primary schools, we only have that data for 2005, and then it comes in for 2006. As you will remember, we put regulations in place in relation to achieving the PLASC data. So, we have said that where schools come into that, on the 2006 PLASC data, they will also become eligible. The final list of schools will be given out before the end of the summer.

[33] The really important message, which I hope that people are able to support today, is that willed evidence relating to disadvantage says you must target to achieve effective outcomes. The extremely effective Excellence in Cities work, which has been going on in England, has been evaluated by the National Foundation for Educational Research, and that involves funding going broadly across schools from local authorities. The NFER says that there should be more targeting in terms of focusing on disadvantage for outcomes.

[34] So, I think that we should give a commitment to the young people of Wales who are

not benefiting as well as possible from the education system that we will change the education system to make it fitter for purpose—which is what Chris and I are doing in launching the 14-19 agenda later today; and the report also notes what we are doing with the introduction of the foundation phase, the new transition arrangements, and the new school improvement arrangements—and give an explicit commitment to our most disadvantaged young people in terms of looking at how best they can get improved outcomes.

[35] We will monitor and evaluate this all the way through, so that research will inform what this committee will want to support in the future. We have made the commitment with two years of funding at present, so that we can actively look at this agenda as we move through. There are a number of areas that we feel, following expert advice from sources including the Welsh Local Government Association and the Association of Directors of Education, should be addressed as regards the targeting. We have laid them all out for you in my report, and I would be interested in your views, particularly if you know what has been particularly effective in your areas. We want this to be broad enough in terms of the kinds of activities that can be effective, but we also want to be quite specific so that the money cannot be used for something else. It must be used for the benefit that this programme can bring.

[36] **Peter Black:** I will bring in Jeff and Christine.

[37] **Jeff Cuthbert:** I hope that I will not be just repeating points that have been made. I accept that it is important that this money reaches young people and children in special, primary and secondary schools, on the basis of need and social justice. There may well be, in the fullness of time, means of establishing the very best way to ensure that it is targeted in the right way. I accept some of the points that have been made about the inadequacies of some of the main indicators that are being used. Nevertheless, we must not lose sight of the big picture, which, as William said, is that this is extra money that has come in unexpectedly. We want to use it, and I think that there seems to be a general point of view that it should be used and targeted at the most disadvantaged.

[38] I am particularly pleased with the paragraph that refers to the special schools that will benefit. I mentioned Trinity Fields school earlier. That has run a project for some time called Promoting Independence, which we will no doubt refer to when we come to item 5 on phase 3 of our special educational needs review. I understand that Trinity Fields may well be a beneficiary of this, and it would certainly want to look at using money to develop schemes that will help some of those particularly disadvantaged pupils to go into further education or the world of employment once they reach school-leaving age. So, I think that that needs to be applauded.

[39] In general, within the Caerphilly borough, which has been referred to, around 35 per cent of adults have no qualifications. As a consequence, their life chances and opportunities for decent employment or self-employment are greatly restricted. Anything that is going to improve that situation has to be welcomed, and that is why it is important that we keep our eye on the big picture and the real intention of this.

[40] It has been mentioned that we will be monitoring and identifying examples of good practice that develop as a result of this investment. I would hope, and I am sure that it will be the case, that educationalists will ensure that the good practice that is identified will be rolled out more generally in the fullness of time, and that the benefits from that good practice will become far more broadly available to educational institutions in years to come. So, overall, I welcome this. There is certainly some tweaking to be done. We want to ensure that no child is ignored when that need not be the case. However, the big issue is right. It is a relatively small amount of money, but I think that it is capable of being used to make a big improvement in the years to come.

[41] **Christine Chapman:** Like Jeff and others, I think that targeting is vital. Otherwise, you are just giving small amounts of money to all schools and not achieving as much. So, I applaud the Minister for making this radical decision to fund schools in this way. There will be a real difference to the life chances of our young people, which is what we all want.

[42] Jane, you mentioned monitoring and evaluation, which I think is needed. Do you have any thoughts at the moment as to what systems will be in place to do this? You may not be able to answer this, but what sort of timescale are we looking at? Will it be within five or 10 years that these young people and schools see a difference? Do you have any thoughts on that?

[43] I agree with Jeff that it is about ensuring that the good practice that will come forward with this is shared and communicated. I know that there is some really good practice out there already, and I think that it is important that other schools, which may not have this money, can pick up on the good things that are happening in some schools and that we can roll this out to other areas.

[44] **Peter Black:** I just wanted to add some comments before I bring the Minister and other Members in. My concern with this grant is that you are working under the assumption that schools are already adequately funded, which is not the case, as is demonstrated by the large number of teacher redundancies across Wales, not all of which are related to surplus places. Every local authority, with the exception of one, has applied the Gershon cuts to education and schools. As it happens, the £14 million in this budget is fairly close to the amount that has been taken out of school budgets. That is worth bearing in mind.

9.30 a.m.

[45] I have some issues with this particular grant. In my own region, Ogmores Comprehensive School, for example, is not getting any of this money. It serves a deprived area, and is a school that has particular financial difficulties. I do not think that that is the only school that is in that sort of situation. Some feeder schools are getting this grant, but the comprehensive schools that they feed into are not getting the grant. That, in itself, is a difficulty that needs to be justified. Minister, you have a two-year commitment, but headteachers are always telling us that they have difficulties with limited-term grants, because they make it difficult for them to plan. How will you enable teachers to plan this scheme over a longer term if it is really a commitment to dealing with deprivation over a long period? Secondly, how will the objectives of the scheme be measured, and what are the criteria against which those measurements will be applied? Will they be transparent so that we can monitor the effectiveness of this scheme?

[46] **Jane Davidson:** I think that it is important to say that, when we took the policy decision to focus on as large a group of people as could reasonably be targeted, with sufficient funding going to each school, it was on the basis of advice from officials after they had number-crunched many times to identify the best possible set of outcomes. On the weightings that operate in the context of the grant, those who are operating at around 20 per cent for free school meals are just above the average level and so they receive no additional weighting. Once they get to 30 per cent, they get an additional weighting of 1.5, and once that reaches 40 per cent, they receive a double weighting in terms of the allocation of the grant. A floor system is allocated to each school before the weighting is added. So, it has been done in a formulaic way for delivery. There is no notion that any individual school benefits; it is the notion that you apply the formula for the weightings. The weightings have been worked out according to the statistics on the links between free school meals and performance. Those statistics were published relatively recently. We can make sure that they are sent to committee members again so that you can see those links. However, the links are absolutely unequivocal as regards the relationship between rising eligibility—not take-up—for free school meals and

performance.

[47] We have had two very constructive meetings with the Welsh Local Government Association. As I said in response to Janet, the WLGA expressed concern on behalf of member authorities because we were using a mechanism that differed from previous mechanisms. However, it also recognised that if funding was to have an impact, it could not be spread over all schools. It fully accepted that agenda. Representatives from the Association of Directors of Education in Wales, whom officials met along with the Welsh Local Government Association, were positive about the scheme, although they knew that the response of their colleagues would be mixed because people would be looking at what, in a sense, came onto their patch. However, this is a national programme being delivered in the school setting—where children are.

[48] We must also not lose sight of the additional £1 million for looked-after children. I met officials from Voices from Care the day after I met with members of this committee, and they were extremely pleased with the additional funding. They felt broadly—although they wanted to test it on other organisations—that we should be looking at attainment in years 10 and 11 for looked-after children, because if we send more of them out to the world as young adults without qualifications, they will be unable to access good jobs, good employment opportunities and good training opportunities for the future, which comes back to Jeff's point.

[49] This is year 1, and I am keen that we have a strong relationship with local government in how we take this forward, because of that very important piece of Wales-only legislation about school improvement, and the partnerships between local government and their individual schools over school improvement as well as over transition, which I will come back to in a moment, to respond to your points, Peter.

[50] Around £2.5 billion is spent on education by the Welsh Assembly Government, either through my portfolio funding or through the local government funding into the schools sector. Against that, it is a relatively small amount of money, but we will then, I hope, be able to see the targeted benefit of improvements, and lessons that can be learned that can then be applied to other settings.

[51] One proposal is that we have a small group of experts recruited from local government operating over the partnership consortia who would be able to help to drive this programme in giving advice to individual schools, for example. That seems to me to be an extremely sensible idea. We said that we would want expert support, but we do not envisage that as consultants coming in from somewhere else. We see that as school improvement professionals in Wales working with their expertise to drive this agenda forwards. We see that as those people who are demonstrating that they are effectively narrowing the gap, translating their experience to others.

[52] On monitoring and evaluation, once the grant is formalised, we will bring to committee the proposals for monitoring and evaluation. I anticipate that that will be before the end of the summer. Therefore, we will lay out how that will be monitored and evaluated, as well as the objectives and the recruitment process for that, because I expect that it will have to go through a normal tendering process, and the kinds of areas being supported.

[53] We can say that it is only for two years because the additional funding has been announced for only two years in the comprehensive spending review processes. We cannot announce funding before that. As an Assembly Government, we see this kind of commitment to ensuring that we can track pupils all the way through, from the primary school into the secondary school sector, as a five-year programme at least, using the transition funding and those school improvement agendas. We already know of schools that are getting into partnership now—schools that will not receive funding and those that will—which are

looking at how lessons can be learned between them. We will work with local government to ensure that those kinds of lessons are delivered quickly on their local patch.

[54] I cannot accept that schools are not adequately funded, given that there was a 5.1 per cent increase to local government, which means that local authorities have £3.5 billion to look at delivery on education. Local authorities do not have hypothecated education grants, other than in discrete elements—it is up to them how they use that funding. I have already expressed my concern about local authorities applying efficiency savings as direct budget cuts. Sue Essex and I have made the position completely clear that, from last November, local authorities' straight budget cuts will not be counted as efficiency savings, and they will be answerable to the Wales Audit Office in that context. It will be interesting to see what the Wales Audit Office says about those local authorities that have taken that route—and what we have not taken. I laid out how schools were allocated funding. There are many occasions on which primary schools have been allocated funding but the secondary school has not. That is because primary schools have a greater concentration of children living with disadvantage. However, the transition arrangements will explicitly look at how those children are supported when they move into the secondary school setting.

[55] So, the combination of the other areas of work that the Assembly Government is engaging in—the change in the curriculum, the 14-19 arrangements, the introduction of the baccalaureate and of the 'Flying Start' programme, which is very important in this context, the new foundation phase, and this targeting—gives us a suite of policy programmes, focused on ensuring that everyone in Wales can benefit from the best kind of education. Separately, we will consider issues around low-performing schools. It cannot be acceptable if schools are performing below what one could consider to be their cohort expectation. We will work more specifically with them, and that is one area that we are asking about in the consultation on the 'The Learning Country'.

9.40 a.m.

[56] **Janet Ryder:** I think that few people, if any, would disagree with people like Jeff who say that we have to target this money. We are dealing with a cash-limited budget in the National Assembly, and you are quite right that things do have to be targeted, but it is how you choose the targeting mechanism that is crucial.

[57] Minister, you spent a long time telling us how you want to raise the educational attainment of those children who come from a less advantageous background. Everybody would want to see that happening. We all want to see a change for those young people who are leaving school with few or no qualifications, so that their life prospects are truly improved, because that would be in the best interest of Wales. Unless we can turn that around, Wales's future will not be good. We have to do that. However, when you choose a mechanism that excludes a school such as Rhyl High School, which takes children from the heart of one of the most deprived communities in Wales, it cannot be a sound educational indicator. It might work at a county level, but when it is drawn down to be applied at an individual school level, it does not work. If you want to affect educational attainment, you really should have been looking at some educational indicators. They are there; there are other indicators that you could have used.

[58] Let me refresh your memory about what SOLACE said to you in its letter: it said that if the grant is intended to raise attainment, it is surprising that figures on school performance have not been used in the distribution. There is a range of perverse impacts from the present proposal, not least that some schools will receive resources even though they perform better than other schools that will not, simply because they happen to have a higher percentage of children receiving free school meals. You are talking about monitoring the impact of this money. If you are monitoring schools that are already helping their children to attain, and they

are getting extra money, then we all hope, and should expect, that those attainment figures will go up again. However, that will not help those children who are in schools that need that extra help that have missed out because of the way in which this has been administered. I would make a plea to the Minister that she look again at how this is distributed. Everybody is going to support targeting, but I ask you to go back and sit down with local government and talk about the indicators that will target this money at those deprived areas so that we will really see improvement in children's behaviour.

[59] **Jane Davidson:** In some senses I am going to have to repeat what I said to you earlier. Estyn uses free school meals as an indicator because of the close relationship between free school meals, as a proxy indicator, and performance. I read a quote to you from the chief inspector's annual report that demonstrated that many of those schools that are not performing effectively are in areas of disadvantage. Therefore, a large number of schools that need additional support will get it through this funding.

[60] There are also schools in there that have put really good programmes in place, so in value-added terms they are performing well above their cohort expectation, and if we had just looked at them on the basis of performance, they would have been excluded in terms of their free school meals quotient. It would seem to me to be extraordinarily unfair that schools that are demonstrating that they can narrow the gap through the kind of activities that they do are then not supported because they are doing so well. I cannot possibly support that.

[61] We need to pick up separately the issues around low performance, as measured by Estyn in terms of how schools are delivering through the inspection system, and we will do so. However, I would not have been happy with a grant that said that those schools that perform badly are going to get extra money. I cannot really think that people on the Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills Committee would have been happy with that either. We want to make sure that schools are able to achieve to the best of their attainment ability. I think that it is also important to say that we have deliberately made sure that this grant goes to primary schools as well as secondary schools.

[62] We could have looked at providing grants to secondary schools only in order to maximise the funding further, but we strongly believe that the way to ensure better education for children is to start from the moment they enter the education system. I know that other Members here strongly support that, which is why this sits with the Flying Start work, the foundation phase work, the curriculum review, the transition phasing, provision for 14 to 19-year-olds and other measures. As I said, where there are primary schools—and there will be such primary schools that feed into Rhyl High School and others—that benefit from this funding, we will track those young people, through the transition agenda, into their high schools. So, all schools that are linked in any way to schools that benefit from RAISE, either in the secondary sector or the primary sector, will need to work together. A much larger number of schools will therefore need to work in co-operation and collaboration than those just involved in terms of the funding mechanism.

[63] I would just repeat that you have not actually given any alternative indicators. We look very hard at these issues, and that is why I said I was particularly keen to see whether we could use the Welsh index of multiple deprivation. However, when you have a proxy indicator that is used by all education commentators in measuring schools' performance, and when that proxy indicator has a very close relationship with performance, and when improved performance is looked at against that, you should start with it. We will continue to do work on this. We do not have a national value-added formula in place at the moment. We will continue to look at the issues in relation to how we can develop this, how we can work with the Welsh index of multiple deprivation, and how we can link this to the Cymorth funding, which operates for a number of the other children-focused agendas and has statistics about children in terms of social care access. However, in year one, in order to have a very clear message

that we want to improve the opportunities for children from the most disadvantaged communities to benefit most effectively from the education system, this seems to be an absolutely reasonable place to start. From my perspective, programmes grow on the basis of the evidence that comes through during the programme.

[64] **Janet Ryder:** It is a shame if the Minister links poorly performing schools with those that take children from a disadvantaged background, because, often, schools that take children from a very disadvantaged background can demonstrate immense value-added education for the children whom they receive. They are not poorly performing schools, but they do need extra help, and many of them will not receive it because of the criteria that the Minister has set. She is going to fail many children who need that extra support because of the distribution mechanism that has been chosen.

[65] **Jane Davidson:** I think that you are quite clearly demonstrating that your party does not support targeted distribution for social justice. It is a perfectly legitimate point of view, but we are absolutely clear that those schools that have already demonstrated that they have that value-added approach are achieving better than you would expect out of the free school meals quotient. Those schools need further support in order to be able to do more, and we all need to learn the lessons from them. The RAISE programme will enable that.

[66] I am slightly disappointed that you have just focused on the mechanism and not on how we will increase standards and the range of opportunities that we have outlined on the basis of the best advice from local government, from directors of education, from within our own department, from research programmes and others, which is laid out here. I would be interested in Members' views on whether there are other areas that you feel could also be included here.

[67] **Peter Black:** We now move to item 3 in the report on immersion and intensive language teaching pilots.

[68] **Owen John Thomas:** Prif amcan y prosiect hwn yw rhoi cyfle i rieni sydd wedi dewis anfon eu plant i ysgolion cyfrwng Saesneg newid eu meddwl a'u rhoi mewn addysg cyfrwng Cymraeg ar y lefel uwchradd. Awgrymaf—yr wyf yn siŵr y gwnewch chi gytuno, Gadeirydd—fod holiaduron yr awdurdodau lleol sydd i fynd allan ymhen rhyw fis yn mynd at rieni plant dan dair oed. Bydd hwn yn cyrraedd, wrth gwrs, lawer o rieni nad ydynt yn ymwybodol o addysg cyfrwng Cymraeg o gwbl a rhoi cyfle iddynt efallai i ddewis addysg cyfrwng Cymraeg, a gwneud y gwaith yn haws nag aros tan bod y plant yn cyrraedd blwyddyn 5 neu 6. Mae'n hanfodol felly bod yr holiaduron yn mynd allan a'u bod yn effeithiol.

Owen John Thomas: The main objective of this project is to give those parents who have chosen to send their children to English-medium schools the opportunity to change their minds and put them into Welsh-medium education at secondary level. I suggest—and I am sure that you will agree, Chair—that the local authority questionnaires that are due to go out in about a month's time be sent to the parents of children under three years of age. This will, of course, reach many of those parents who are totally unaware of Welsh-medium education and give them an opportunity to choose Welsh-medium education and make the job easier than waiting until children have reached years 5 or 6. It is essential therefore that these questionnaires go out and that they are effective.

9.50 a.m.

[69] A fydd y plant hyn sydd yn gwneud y cwrs byr yma o gael bopeth drwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg am dymor cyn trosglwyddo o Will these children who take this short course of having everything through the medium of Welsh for a term before transferring from

flwyddyn 6 i ysgol uwchradd Gymraeg yn mynd i mewn i'r un band neu ddsbarth gyda'i gilydd? Bydd llawer o broblemau yn codi yn y fan hon achos bydd galluoedd gwahanol gan y plant mewn gwahanol bynciau. Fodd bynnag, os nad ydynt gyda'i gilydd a'u bod wedi cael eu dosbarthu mewn llawer i ddsbarth yn y flwyddyn gyntaf yn yr ysgol, bydd her enfawr i'r athrawon i ymdrin â chanran bach o blant yn y dosbarth sydd ddim yn gallu siarad Cymraeg yn rhugl, tra bod gweddill y dosbarth wedi bod yn mynychu ysgolion cyfrwng Cymraeg. Mae angen edrych ar hyn yn ofalus iawn.

[70] Mae'r adroddiad yn ddiddorol iawn. Mae'n ymdrin â'r gwahanol fodolau, ac yr wyf yn falch eich bod wedi gwneud hynny a'i bod yn bosibl gweld eu heffeithiolrwydd. Gwelaf bod modelau 1, 4 a 5 yn cael mwy o glod na'r lleill. Yr ydych yn sôn bod y bobl sy'n gwneud model 5 wedi cael tymor cyfan ym mlwyddyn 5 lle yr oedd 90 y cant o'r gwersi trwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg, gyda 10 y cant arall yn wersi Saesneg siŵr o fod. Fodd bynnag, ar ôl mynd i flwyddyn 6, dim ond 20 y cant o'r gwersi hynny sydd trwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg. Ai'r bwriad yw i'r plant yma fynd ymlaen i ysgol uwchradd? Os felly, mae'r diffyg cysondeb yn y broses ymdrochi yn frawychus.

[71] Mae'n bwysig iawn nad ydych yn rhuthro i ffurfio unrhyw gasgliadau ar hyn. Nid oes digon o ysgolion wedi cael eu defnyddio, ac nid yw hyn wedi cael ei ddefnyddio am gyfnod digon hir. Wrth i'r addysg cyfrwng Gymraeg gynyddu, a bod mwy a mwy o bobl yn dod drwy'r system, bydd mwy o gyfle i gael athrawon i wneud hyn mewn mwy o lefydd. Ar hyn o bryd, mae'n ddiddorol, ond mae gennyf nifer o bryderon ynglŷn â'r system.

[72] Mae'r gweithgareddau allgyrsiol yn bwysig iawn, ac yr wyf yn falch eich bod wedi cynnwys hynny yn y prosiect. Sonisaoch rywle yn yr adroddiad am ddefnyddio mentrau iaith, yn ogystal â'r awdurdodau addysg lleol a staff yr ysgolion uwchradd, i gynllunio gweithgareddau allgyrsiol ar gyfer y disgyblion, ond bod problemau wedi codi ac nad oedd hynny wedi digwydd. Fodd bynnag, ewch ymlaen wedyn i ddweud yn yr argymhellion y dylai

year 6 to a Welsh-medium secondary school, go into the same band or class together? Many problems will arise here because children will have differing abilities in different subjects. However, if they are not together and have been dispersed into many classes in their first year in school, the teachers will face great challenges in dealing with a small percentage of children in the classroom who cannot speak Welsh fluently, while the rest of the class have been attending Welsh-medium schools. This needs to be looked at very carefully.

The report is very interesting. It deals with various models, and I am pleased that you have done that and that we can see their effectiveness. I see that models 1, 4 and 5 are praised more highly than the others. You refer to the fact that children undertaking model 5 had a full term in year 5 in which 90 per cent of the lessons were taught through the medium of Welsh, with the other 10 per cent probably English lessons. However, once they go to year 6, only 20 per cent of these lessons are through the medium of Welsh. Is the aim that these children go on to Welsh-medium secondary schools? If so, the lack of consistency in the immersion process is shocking.

It is very important that you do not rush to draw conclusions from this. Not enough schools have been used, and this has not been used for a long enough period. As Welsh-medium education grows, and more and more people come through the system, there will be more opportunity for teachers to do this in more places. At present, it is interesting, but I have many concerns about the system.

Extracurricular activities are very important, and I am pleased that you have included that in the project. You mentioned somewhere in the report about using mentrau iaith, as well as the local education authorities and the staff at secondary schools, to plan extracurricular activities for the pupils, but that problems had occurred and that that had not happened. However, you go on to say in the recommendations that the Welsh Language Board, the local education authorities and

Bwrdd yr Iaith Gymraeg, awdurdodau addysg lleol ac ysgolion uwchradd ddarparu gweithgareddau allgyrsiol trwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg i gryfhau'r Gymraeg ac i gynyddu'r nifer o gyfleoedd sydd gan blant i glywed a defnyddio'r iaith. Nid ydych yn cynnwys mentrau iaith yn yr argymhelliad hwnnw. A ddywedwch yn union beth sydd gyda chi mewn golwg a sut y credwch y gall hyn gael ei gyflawni'n fwyaf effeithiol?

[73] Yn olaf, soniwyd yn y pedwerydd pwynt bwled o dan A3 am godi ymwybyddiaeth rhieni a disgyblion am botensial trosglwyddo rhwng addysg Gymraeg a Saesneg mewn ardaloedd sydd wedi'u targedu. Yr wyf yn pryderu ynglŷn â chodi disgwyliadau rhieni yn rhy uchel o ran meddwl bod hyn yn bosibl—os nad yw'r plant yn cyrraedd rhyw safon erbyn diwedd eu blwyddyn olaf yn yr ysgol gynradd, wedi iddynt gael eu trochi yn yr iaith Gymraeg, nid yw'n deg iddynt fynd i ysgol uwchradd Gymraeg lle byddant yn ei chael yn anodd iawn. Byddent dan anfantais enfawr o'u cymharu â phlant fyddai'n dod o ysgolion cynradd Cymraeg. Felly, mae angen mwy o waith ar hyn.

[74] Yn ogystal, mae cryn dipyn o dystiolaeth wedi'i gasglu o'r hen gynllun dwyieithrwydd, a ddefnyddiwyd ledled Cymru mewn dros 100 o ysgolion, am ba ganran o blant a ystyriwyd yn ddigon rhugl yn y Gymraeg i fynd ymlaen i astudio mewn ysgolion uwchradd Cymraeg. Mae'r gwaith wedi'i wneud ar hyn ac mae llwyth o dystiolaeth ar gael yn barod. Gofynnaf ichi edrych arno, cyn gwastraffu gormod o amser a chodi disgwyliadau rhieni i lefel sydd yn rhy uchel ac a fydd yn arwain at siom i lawer ohonynt.

[75] **Jane Davidson:** Mae'r adroddiad yn ddiddorol iawn, gan ei fod yn annibynnol ac yn ystyried pa fath o system sydd orau i greu cyfle arall i'r bobl—plant a rhieni—nad ydynt wedi dewis addysg Gymraeg pan oedd y plentyn yn dair mlwydd oed. Felly, mae'n ystyried pa fath o fodel fydd y mwyaf llwyddiannus. Mae'r prosiect yn ystyried tystiolaeth o Ganada a lleoedd fel hynny. Mae Bwrdd yr Iaith Gymraeg yn cefnogi'r agenda yn gryf iawn ac yn rhoi cyngor inni am y canlyniadau.

secondary schools should provide extracurricular activities through the medium of Welsh to increase the opportunities for pupils to hear and use the language. You do not include mentrau iaith in that recommendation. Will you outline exactly what you envisage and how you believe that this can be achieved most effectively?

Finally, you mention in the fourth bullet point under A3 the raising of parents' and pupils awareness of the potential to transfer between Welsh and English-medium education in targeted areas. I am concerned about raising parents' expectations to too high a level in terms of believing that this is possible—if the children do not reach a certain standard by the end of their final year in primary school, following a period of Welsh-language immersion, it is not fair for them to go to a Welsh-medium secondary school, which they will find very difficult. They would be greatly disadvantaged in comparison with children leaving a Welsh-medium primary school. Therefore, more work is needed on this.

Significant evidence has also been collected from the former bilingualism scheme, used across Wales in over 100 schools, regarding the percentage of children considered to be fluent enough in Welsh to go on to study at a Welsh-medium secondary school. Work has already been undertaken on this and there is already plenty of evidence available. I ask you to look at that, before you waste too much time and raise parents' expectations to too high a level, which will lead to disappointment for many of them.

Jane Davidson: This is a most interesting report, because it is independent and considers what kind of system is best to provide another opportunity for the people—both parents and their children—who did not opt for Welsh-medium education at the age of three. So, it considers which would be the most successful model. The project has taken evidence from Canada and such places. The Welsh Language Board supports this agenda most strongly and advises us on the outcomes.

[76] Mae'n ddiddorol—ac yr oeddwn i'n cytuno ar hyn—mai'r system orau yw'r un sydd yn gwneud yn glir beth yw'r berthynas rhwng ysgolion cynradd ac ysgolion cyfun. Mae'r modelau yn wahanol, gan fod rhai o'r modelau ar gyfer ysgolion cynradd a rhai yn defnyddio ysgolion cyfun. Mae rhai o'r modelau'n defnyddio athrawon o ysgolion cyfun mewn ysgolion cynradd, er enghraifft.

It is interesting—and I agreed with this—that the best system is the one that highlights the relationship between primary schools and comprehensive schools. The models are different, because some of the models are just for primary schools and others for comprehensive schools. Some of the models use comprehensive school teachers within the primary school setting, for instance.

[77] Mae'n bwysig gwneud yn glir beth yw'r modelau gorau i'w hystyried ar gyfer y dyfodol, pe bai'r rhaglen yn cael ei chyflwyno ledled Cymru. Wrth annog mwy o bobl i ddefnyddio addysg Gymraeg, mae'n bwysig sicrhau y bydd ail gyfle i ymuno â'r system i'r bobl nad ydynt yn dewis gwneud ar y cyfle cyntaf. Yr ydych yn gofyn inni beidio â gwneud penderfyniadau mawr ar hyn o bryd am y dystiolaeth, ac yr wyf yn cytuno, gan mai dim ond blwyddyn gyntaf y prosiect yw hi, ac mae'n rhedeg mewn grŵp bach o ysgolion. Fodd bynnag, mae diddordeb mawr yn y prosiect. Mae mwy o ysgolion yn dod. Mae diddordeb mawr gan Estyn yn y ffaith ei fod yn gwella safon yr ail iaith hefyd. Felly, mae'n bwysig o ran yr agenda honno.

It is important to make it clear which are the best models to be considered for the future, if we were to roll out the programme across Wales. When we encourage more people to opt for Welsh-medium education, it is important to ensure that there will be a second opportunity to enter into the system for those who do not opt in at the first opportunity. You ask us not to make any major decisions at present based on this evidence, and I agree, as this is only the first year of the project and it is undertaken in a small group of schools. However, there is huge interest in this project. More schools are coming. Estyn is greatly interested in the fact that this improves the standard of the second language as well. Therefore, it important in terms of that agenda.

[78] Felly, ar hyn o bryd, mae'r adroddiad ar yr agenda a gallwch feddwl amdano. Byddwn yn cario'r prosiect ymlaen am yr ail flwyddyn ac yn adrodd yn ôl i'r pwyllgor wedi'r ail flwyddyn honno.

So, at present, the report is on the agenda, and you can think about it. We will be taking the project forward for a second year and reporting back to the committee after that second year is concluded.

[79] **Peter Black:** The next item is item 4, which is *athrawon bro*.

10.00 a.m.

[80] **Janet Ryder:** I ask the Minister, first of all, for some clarification on this. As the Minister knows, I have been following the whole issue of *athrawon bro* with some concern, and the important role that they play in the development of Welsh-medium education. The grant that was used to support *athrawon bro* was distributed through the Welsh Language Board. Now that the language board is coming in-house, will the Minister confirm whether the grant will come under her direction or will it transfer to Alun Pugh?

[81] **Jane Davidson:** It is in Alun Pugh's portfolio now; it is distributed via the language board.

[82] **Janet Ryder:** So the Assembly Government has not thought of bringing this element of education into the education and children's section?

[83] **Jane Davidson:** It would be up to Alun Pugh, as Minister, to make a statement at some point to the Assembly about what the arrangements will mean when the Welsh

Language Board merges with us. It is important to say that, at the moment, the *athrawon bro* grant comes through the Welsh Language Board—it is not a grant that is delivered from my portfolio.

[84] You asked about the terms and conditions of the *athrawon bro* in terms of teaching and learning responsibility grants. That is what I have reported on mostly in the report today.

[85] **Janet Ryder:** I appreciate that that was the initial request, but with the language board developments, it is important that we know on which Minister to put the pressure as regards *athrawon bro*. If it will continue to be administered by the Minister for Culture, Welsh Language and Sport, perhaps it is an issue best dealt with by that committee, although it is a significant part of Welsh-medium education. If the Minister for Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills does not have control over it, she needs to have a significant input into it.

[86] Changes are taking place, with the language board transferring into the National Assembly. You set out the important work that *athrawon bro* do, and, because of the limitations on their grant, the work that they would like to do. Many aspects that could be developed cannot be developed because of limitations within the grant. It may not be possible to increase that grant, but it may be time to look again at the whole issue of *athrawon bro* and the way in which the work is funded and structured. With regard to the many teachers who are employed through the scheme, it may be time to look at creating a good career pathway for them through the work of *athrawon bro*. Many teachers who teach in mainstream schools will become *athrawon bro*, and some will go back into mainstream schools. The concern was that if those teachers who were initially employed as teachers were to transfer into another terms-and-conditions structure, they would lose the advantages of their pension schemes and everything else that goes with it. It is very important that they keep that continuity.

[87] If we are going to encourage a wide variety of people to come into teaching, we must look at how we can develop opportunities such as working as *athrawon bro*. Does the Minister think that this is the appropriate time to look again at this scheme, across Wales, to see how it can be improved, especially now that it is becoming the direct responsibility of Ministers, and to look at how we can use this scheme alongside what has been done to develop bilingual and Welsh-medium education?

[88] **Peter Black:** Please keep it very short, Owen.

[89] **Owen John Thomas:** Yr wyf wedi derbyn adroddiadau gan nifer o athrawon bro mewn sawl sir sy'n dangos erbyn hyn fod y menyng yn cael ei ledaenu'n denau iawn. Hynny yw, mae athrawon bro sy'n ymweld â degau o ysgolion bob wythnos ac yn treulio dim ond rhyw hanner awr yno cyn symud ymlaen i ysgol arall. Nid yw hynny'n arwain at blant sydd yn gallu siarad yr iaith, ar lefel syml, hyd yn oed, yn y mwyafrif o leoedd. Mewn rhai siroedd, mae nifer yr athrawon bro y pen yn eithaf uchel ac effeithiol—yr ydych yn gallu gweld yr effaith. Ni wnaf enwi'r siroedd hynny yn awr, ond yr wyf yn fodlon gwneud hynny os ydych am wybod—yr wyf yn siŵr eich bod yn gwybod pa siroedd yw'r rhai hynny. Mewn siroedd eraill, yn arbennig yn y de-ddwyrain, mae nifer yr athrawon bro mor isel fel nad yw'r

Owen John Thomas: I have received reports from many *athrawon bro* in many counties which show that the butter is now being spread very thinly. That is, *athrawon bro* visit tens of schools each week but only spend half an hour in each before moving to another school. That does not lead to children being able to speak the language, on even a most basic level, in most places. In some counties, the number of *athrawon bro* per head is quite high and effective—you can see the effect. I will not name those counties, but I am willing to tell you if you wish to know—I am sure that you also know where they are. In other counties, particularly in south-east Wales, the number of *athrawon bro* is so low that the system does not have the effect that it should have, and the subsequent demands on *athrawon bro*

system yn cael yr effaith y dylai ei chael, ac mae'r disgwyliadau o'r athrawon bro, o ganlyniad, yn amhosibl. Mae angen edrych ar hyn, a sicrhau bod y drefn yn llawer mwy effeithiol nag ydyw ar hyn o bryd. Mae angen mwy o athrawon bro ac mae angen edrych ar y system gyfan.

become impossible. We need to look at this issue, and ensure that the system is far more effective than it is at present. We need more *athrawon bro* and we need to look at the whole system.

[90] **Jane Davidson:** The terms and conditions of employment of *athrawon bro* vary between local education authorities. Those who are teachers are covered by teachers' pay and conditions; those who are not will be covered by their own employment pay and conditions. I have outlined the role of *athrawon bro* very clearly in the report, but if you have particular questions about that, you will need to raise them with the Minister responsible for *athrawon bro* delivery.

[91] **Peter Black:** Thank you. We have now run out of time for the Minister's report.

[92] **Jeff Cuthbert:** I am not trying to prolong this but, unfortunately, we did not get to item 8 of the Minister's report, which was on construction skills. I often feel that we do not talk enough about the skills side of our work. Is it possible for this item to be in the next report, perhaps a bit higher up the agenda? It will still be timely and relevant.

[93] **Peter Black:** I am sure that the Minister would be happy to oblige.

[94] **Jane Davidson:** Yes.

10.06 a.m.

Rhagolwg ar Is-ddeddfwriaeth Secondary Legislation Forward Look

[95] **Peter Black:** The purpose of this item is for Members to note from the list provided items of subordinate legislation for future scrutiny. There have not been any significant changes to the timetable or the proposed procedure for items previously notified, but there are three new items. One is the approval of qualifications under section 99 of the Learning and Skills Act 2000, the second is the Higher Education Act 2004 (Commencement No. 2 and Transitional Provision) (Wales) (Amendment) Order 2006, and the third is the Education (Student Support) (European Institutions) (Wales) Regulations 2006. As usual, if Members wish to identify any items for scrutiny, please e-mail the clerk and we will endeavour to accommodate them on the agenda.

10.07 a.m.

Monitro Argymhellion Adroddiad y Pwyllgor ar Anghenion Addysgol Arbennig Rhan 1—Adnabod ac Ymyrryd yn Gynnar Monitoring the Recommendations of the Committee's Report into Special Educational Needs Part 1—Early Identification and Intervention

[96] **Peter Black:** I will invite the Minister to make a brief introduction to this report. Alan Lansdown, from the additional needs and inclusion section, and Mair Watkins, from the special educational needs and inclusion section, of the Department for Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills will join us at the table.

[97] **Jane Davidson:** We had a substantial report when we, as a committee, published the

first stage of our work on special educational needs, namely that on early identification and intervention. I then published a Cabinet written statement responding in detail to each of the committee's recommendations on 25 January 2005. I wanted to update you again, now that we are in 2006, on how we are taking forward the agenda that was identified through this committee's work and how we are moving forward to our second stage. We will be discussing our third-stage work later this morning.

[98] There is still more to be done and I have indicated in this response where further work needs to be undertaken. We will be pulling together all of this when the recommendations from the second-stage work come out and as we move forward into the third stage. Alan Lansdown and Mair Watkins are the officials charged with the responsibility to ensure that the agenda that we have identified as a committee is carried forward in budget rounds and others; therefore, they can respond in detail to issues that Members raise.

[99] **William Graham:** I have reservations on the monitoring of expenditure, but I would also like to know when the report on the work of the national liaison officer for Welsh-medium speech and language services is likely to be available? Also, Estyn is currently considering the review of the formula used to allocate SEN funding to LEAs. When will that be available?

[100] **Ms Watkins:** On the first point, the co-ordinator was appointed, I believe, over 12 months ago now. She is working with colleagues in health, but she is based in the Welsh language unit within health. She has given us an interim report. I believe that the secondment is due to come to an end at the end of May. I can certainly get Members a copy of the report so far so that they can see what work has been undertaken.

10.10 a.m.

[101] Could you repeat the second question?

[102] **William Graham:** It was regarding the Estyn review of SEN funding.

[103] **Ms Watkins:** We are working with Estyn, the Wales Audit Office and the Social Services Inspectorate for Wales to undertake a full review of the funding. I think that it was important that we looked at this from the out-of-county, specialist placement angle. So, it was not just about what happens in terms of SEN funding. From that, we will have some good practice guidance. The work is due to start in September and it should be completed by March 2007.

[104] **Peter Black:** Okay. Does anyone else have a question? Minister?

[105] **Jane Davidson:** A review of the formula used to allocate SEN funding to local authorities is being conducted through our partnership with local government through the consultative forum on finance, and the distribution sub-group is also under way. So, we are looking at all aspects of delivery on SEN funding, as recommended in the report.

[106] **Peter Black:** In paragraph 11 of your report, Minister, you refer to the joint working flexibilities grant, which has moved into the revenue support grant from this financial year. How are you monitoring expenditure in relation to that grant?

[107] **Jane Davidson:** May I refer you back to Mair?

[108] **Ms Watkins:** Unfortunately, this one, again, was based outside education, if you like, in terms of the flexibilities grant, but it is my understanding that the grant has now come to an end. So, it has gone into the revenue support grant. Since then, we have had the Children Act

2004, and we will be providing further guidance on joint working and the use of funding that we give in terms of regional provision and collaboration. So, the grant itself has now come to an end.

[109] **Peter Black:** Obviously, the grant and perhaps part of the RSG may have finished, but the purposes for which that grant was given are still relevant and, obviously, you, or whichever division or department was responsible for it, were monitoring that while the grant was in place. How will that monitoring continue and will that still be looked at in relation to those particular outcomes now that it is part of the RSG?

[110] **Ms Watkins:** I do not know the answer to that, but we can certainly find out and get back to the committee.

[111] **Peter Black:** Okay. Thank you. Jeff?

[112] **Jeff Cuthbert:** My question relates to paragraphs 51 and 52 of the Minister's report, on the provision of information to parents. Anecdotally, this still seems to be a problem. I am sure that my constituents are no different from constituents elsewhere in Wales in that regard. Even with phase 1—and this will apply right through to when children become older—there seems to be an information mismatch. The schools may be clear about the levels of support that they are meant to provide, including behavioural support, for example, but judging by the number of parents who have come to me with this problem—and I do not want to exaggerate the number—it seems that they do not have the same level of understanding. The issue of the provision of information to parents on what they can expect from the school and from the LEA more generally is crucial.

[113] I note that you are conducting an audit of the information this year and that you will be working with SNAP Cymru, but do you have any feel of whether there have been considerable improvements on what used to be? You are nodding; that is good. However, do you feel that we are heading in the right direction?

[114] **Ms Watkins:** Yes. The Minister recently launched a parent information pack in Bridgend. It is a very good model, which we will be looking at to see whether we can follow it. We will have a meeting shortly with the early support team from the DfES, which has provided a range of materials and information for parents. We are looking to see whether we can also adapt or adopt something of that nature in Wales. With the revamp of the Learning Wales site, we have an opportunity to put more information on the inclusion part of the website so that we can get some consistent messages across Wales.

[115] **Janet Ryder:** There seem to be a number of delays related to the Learning Wales website. What has caused the problems and the delays?

[116] **Mr Landsdown:** I am not sure whether we are in a position to comment on that. We just contribute to it.

[117] **Janet Ryder:** That is one of the reasons why some of the recommendations have not progressed as well as they should have. What can we do to ensure that that is resolved and followed through?

[118] **Ms Watkins:** From what I understand, it is almost there, structurally. I can tell you what I have done to support that. In terms of the inclusion website, we have tried to make it a lot clearer and to set out where the information is for parents. I think that, in the past, in all honesty, the website needed to be easier to navigate. That is the work that has been undertaken centrally. I have no idea why there has been a delay with the technical side of it. However, as far as we know, we are ready and the information for additional needs and

inclusion is ready to go on the website.

[119] **Janet Ryder:** So, it is a technical problem that is holding it up.

[120] **Ms Watkins:** I do not know, Janet, I am sorry.

[121] **Janet Ryder:** Would the Minister be able to give us any clearer guidance on this?

[122] **Jane Davidson:** No, because what we do in our department is to ensure that the information that we want on the website is fed to the appropriate source. However, I am sure that we can drop a note to committee about when the Learning Wales website will be up and functioning properly. I know that a number of structural changes were made as a result of the mergers, which have meant that information and communication technology professionals have invested a large amount of time in ensuring that all the information is properly brought together. I will write to you, Chair, to let you know whether there are any other outstanding issues. I am not aware of any. The new Learning Wales website was demonstrated to me around three weeks ago, and it was wonderful. So, if it is not there now, I will let you know when you can have similar access.

[123] **Janet Ryder:** Just for clarification, which Minister is responsible for seeing this through?

[124] **Peter Black:** Are you referring to the website?

[125] **Janet Ryder:** Yes.

[126] **Jane Davidson:** I expect that it is Jane Hutt as Minister with responsibility for communication.

[127] **Peter Black:** Right. Christine?

[128] **Christine Chapman:** Reference is made on page 2 of the report to the introduction of the three-year children and young people's plan from 2008 and to the fact that it is a complex project. It will obviously involve a number of organisations working together, and, by its nature, it will also cover quite a wide range of issues. My concern is that we should not lose the focus on SEN in this. Do you have any comments on how we can ensure that SEN remains a central issue within the children and young people's plan?

[129] **Ms Watkins:** It is certainly in there and is a focus. We have ensured that the plan is about not just SEN, but the whole equality and inclusion agenda. So, it is a very much a focus of the new plan and I think that that is its underlying theme. We have some specifics that we have asked authorities to tell us about for a whole range of children with additional learning needs. So, that is also part of the plan.

[130] **Irene James:** Paragraphs 16 and 17 refer to teacher training. What responses and feedback have you had from teachers about the new qualified teacher status and the way in which it will go forward under this review?

[131] **Ms Watkins:** We have established a task group called Empowering the Workforce, which is made up of teachers, special educational needs co-ordinators, learning support assistants, as well as Estyn, higher education institutions and providers, and so on. I do not think that anyone had any particular problems with the standards because they state quite clearly what needs to be achieved. I think that the issue has come from how those standards are applied consistently.

10.20 a.m.

[132] We have seconded a senior lecturer at the University of Wales, Bangor, who wrote 'Acknowledging Need' on the Welsh language. He is currently undertaking a survey across Wales and working with higher education institutions to look at what these standards mean, what is being delivered on initial teacher training, and how that is taken forward in continuing professional development. To support that, we have developed an e-learning course for special needs, which is unique in that it covers a number of modules on additional learning needs. It is something that can be undertaken through distance learning, but there is also a resource pack for schools to use in terms of early identification and support. We are, therefore, also working on the continuing professional development element.

[133] **Irene James:** Wonderful.

[134] **Jane Davidson:** I would like to add one further point. The standards apply not only to those trained in initial teacher training institutions, but to those trained through employment-based routes.

[135] **Peter Black:** I would like to ask one more question, Minister. Paragraph 36 of the report refers to the guidance for parents and carers, which was last updated in 2002. The report states that there are plans to review the guidance in the current financial year, which is roughly 18 months to two years after the recommendation was made in the report to update this guidance. Is this a workload issue or are there other issues? I am concerned that the information that parents are getting is not fully up to date in terms of what the Assembly Government is providing.

[136] **Ms Watkins:** It is in part, but the guidance that we currently have is based on the current legislative framework. When this guidance was developed in 2002, it was developed in collaboration with SNAP Cymru, so we knew that we had the tone and the messages that SNAP felt that parents needed. Nothing has changed in terms of the legislation so far. As I mentioned in my response to Jeff, we are looking at a range of information for parents, and this guidance will be part of the review that we will undertake this year with SNAP, to see if it is still relevant and user-friendly, and to look at what else needs to be included.

[137] **Jane Davidson:** From launching the work in Bridgend, we have found that where local authorities are able to demonstrate that they have effective approaches to parents, we will want to ensure, as will SNAP, that they are accommodated in new updated guidance. As a committee, we have done far more work since we published our first guidance, and we will want to ensure that all of that expertise is brought into play.

[138] **Peter Black:** Thank you, Minister. Are there any other points on this?

[139] **Janet Ryder:** Are you satisfied that the parent partnership arrangements are now up and running satisfactorily in every county?

[140] **Ms Watkins:** Yes. All counties have the parent partnership arrangements. I believe that 20 of them are supported through SNAP Cymru. Two are supported through citizens advice bureaux in north Wales. There was a review in 2002 of the parent partnership services to see whether they were working effectively. What has happened with that and the disagreement resolution services is that parents and local authorities are working together, and the parent partnership services are certainly helping to facilitate that. I am not saying that there are no problems; there are problems, and we still have some disputes with parents over provision and support, and we have the tribunal mechanism in place. However, on the whole, it has improved greatly.

[141] **Mr Lansdown:** The feedback that I have received from the secretary of the special educational needs tribunal is that it is working well with the parent partnership arrangements, and it has not reported any difficulties from its perspective in terms of its operations.

[142] **Peter Black:** I thank you for a very comprehensive report. It has been helpful to have that feedback on our recommendations and to see that they are progressing, by and large, satisfactorily. We can hopefully keep an eye on that in future reports. When part 2 of our review is published, we can hopefully take this further in terms of how we will deal with the SEN agenda in the future. Thank you very much.

10.25 a.m.

Cylch Gorchwyl—Adolygiad o Anghenion Addysgol Arbennig Rhan 3: Pontio Terms of Reference—Review into Special Educational Needs Part 3: Transition

[143] **Peter Black:** We have a report to consider from the Members' research service, I believe, on the terms of reference. We are seeking to agree the terms of reference for the third stage of the policy review into special educational needs, which will deal with transition, and also to discuss possible invitees to evidence sessions in the summer term. Do Members have any comments on the paper or on the terms of reference of this review that they would like to see—we will start with the terms of reference—remembering that this will have to be a fairly quick review? I think that we will have to have the report before Plenary by next February if we are to finish it before the Assembly elections.

[144] **Jeff Cuthbert:** Under point 1, 'background', of the Members' research service's paper, there is a list of issues of concern that were raised, which I dare say can form the skeleton of the terms of reference. However, the fifth bullet point, about the transition from the various stages of schooling, but particularly from secondary to post 16, is of particular importance. It is shown here in a bracket as if it is incidental, but it is critical. That is the point when young people with special, or additional, needs move into adulthood. In my experience, it is where the greatest problem often lies for them—when they come out of the sheltered environment of a school, or whatever, into something rather less controlled, whether it is a further education college or employment. We need to do far more work, particularly with employers, and work jointly with them in this review to identify what they need, how they can contribute, and how they can draw on the talent of those young people who formerly had these additional needs, so that they become useful and productive adults. So, I would like to see that as a key part of the review.

[145] **Peter Black:** Yes, that is the point.

[146] **William Graham:** I endorse entirely what Jeff says. However, can we link that in with the terms of reference, looking specifically at collaboration? It comes out in all the papers with which we have been presented today, and is a vital element that I would like to emphasise.

[147] **Janet Ryder:** The time to consider the transition between primary and secondary, and post 16 and adult life will be so constrained that we just would not have time. I agree that post 16, leaving school, and the transition into college, further education or employment all needs consideration. However, that is an incredibly wide field; I do not know whether Jeff feels that we will be able to consider everything. We must consider the opportunities that we offer to young people, because we are still stereotyping people slightly. We have not really explored the full potential that these young people have to offer, to ensure that the opportunities and the support are there for them. If we are to consider that transition phase, we must appreciate that it goes beyond educational needs—for many, it is looking at housing

needs and support within the community and independent living. So, I do not know whether we want to be specific, or whether we want to say that we will consider as much of that as we can and then perhaps ask a future committee to take it on further, highlighting areas that needs further research.

[148] **Peter Black:** I found paragraph 3.2 of the report, which is the summary of the Estyn research, helpful in that regard. On page 3, there is a range of issues that Estyn has identified, which could be useful to focus on as part of this particular aspect. You are right that the transition from education to work is the key issue that we wanted to consider as part of this.

[149] **Christine Chapman:** I endorse what Jeff said, because much good work is happening now at early level, but there are many problems for young people as they try to work with employers. I would be keen to get representatives from employment and the agencies that support people with disabilities, because there is a huge amount of work to be done there, and there are many issues that I would like to explore. It is a big area, but I am keen to focus on the transition into employment.

10.30 a.m.

[150] **Jane Davidson:** I have two points to make. First, this analysis takes no account of the transition planning that we have set up and consulted upon, on the back of the Education Act 2002, and on which we are about to deliver, which is unfortunate considering the committee's work. However, that transition planning, to which I referred at length earlier, is able to give more guarantees than this slightly inaccurate statement that the information that flows from primary to secondary schools is usually standard assessment test levels. It is inaccurate because we have taken SATs and testing out of the system in Wales and we are looking at new arrangements for assessments of learning.

[151] Children will move somewhere at the age of 11 on a guaranteed basis, and the key issue in this agenda, on which I would utterly support other Members, is that beyond the age of 16 they do not move anywhere on a guaranteed basis. We know that the voluntary organisations—the Royal National Institute for the Blind, for example, undertook work last year on issues around transition—have demonstrated time and again that we lose young people when they are not given adequate support when they come to make choices. We can monitor separately some of the issues around special educational needs or additional learning needs through our transition planning, since we have this statutory base of operation in Wales, which is not referred to here. We should focus on the voluntary transition and the support that people need in moving out of statutory education.

[152] **Peter Black:** Do I take it that we are looking at focusing this review on the transition period from education into work, post 16 or 18? Do Members agree that the summary that Estyn has set out on page 3 will make a fairly good basis for the terms of reference of the review? We could cull them from that and maybe tackle the issues that Estyn raised. Do Members think that that would be a good starting point? We will bring this back next time, to look at the terms of reference before we go to consultation, but I think that the issues that Estyn has raised might be a useful crib from which to pull the terms of reference.

[153] **Janet Ryder:** I know that we are working in a short timescale, but would it be possible to take those terms of reference to specific groups, such as Mencap? We could say, 'These are the terms of reference that we are thinking of looking at; is there anything that you think that we need to add or is there a specific area in there that you want us to look at?'

[154] **Peter Black:** It would have to be a quick turnaround, because we are looking to come back and approve the terms of reference in two weeks' time. We could say that we will draw them up as soon as possible and ask groups to comment on them, and then we may want to

amend them at a later stage in the light of that, rather than within the two-week timeframe, if Members are happy with that. As for who will be invited to come here to talk to us, obviously, we will need Estyn to come in as we are basing the review around its recommendations. I also thought of Careers Wales, Fforwm and other further education institutions—

[155] **Jeff Cuthbert:** I would suggest the Confederation of British Industry.

[156] **Peter Black:** We can include the CBI and maybe Remploy as it does a lot of work in this area. Are there any other suggestions?

[157] **Christine Chapman:** What about the support employment agency?

[158] **Peter Black:** Right.

[159] **Janet Ryder:** I think that we have to include people who work with families.

[160] **Peter Black:** That is right. I think that we will be generally looking to those sorts of groups to give evidence to us. We will put together a consultation during the summer period. We will get the consultation out as soon as possible, but it will run into the summer period, unfortunately. However, we will try to get a consultation out to people so that they can send points in to us to be included in the terms of reference.

[161] **Jane Davidson:** May I just add some groups that might want to give evidence? I mentioned that the RNIB did some specific work on issues around transition, but there are other similar agencies, including the Royal National Institute for Deaf People and others, which have national briefs for particular additional learning needs. Such agencies will have knowledge of the perspective of their own client group.

[162] **Peter Black:** Do Members have any other suggestions? You can e-mail the clerk or you can pass the suggestions to me and I will pass them on to the clerk.

[163] **Janet Ryder:** On this part of the review, how are we going to reach people with it? In the past, we have tried to work through schools and established groups; now we are moving into an area where, perhaps, those formal contacts are not so visible. Even in previous rounds of this review, there have been one or two complaints that people have not found out about the review and have not been able to feed into it for one reason or another. So, how will we handle the public consultation side of it?

[164] **Peter Black:** I think that it would be useful to get people who actually use the services to give evidence to us—that would be one way. I do not know whether Mair or Alan have any idea how we could get young people who have been affected by this transition phase to come and talk to us, do you?

[165] **Ms Watkins:** It is difficult. Is there a group? I can think of a particular project as a model for developing transition: the Promoting Independence project under way at Trinity Fields Special School in Caerphilly. However, as you say, those are pupils who are in the school. You could go to FE colleges, but there are also other work-based learning providers, such as private organisations that have been established to provide work for adults with learning disabilities. It could be through those organisations that you can talk to adults who were not given opportunities and ask what they would have done had they been given opportunities and what the difficulties were. So, there are a couple of organisations—I know of one in Cardiff and one in Torfaen—that were established to provide work-based learning for adults with learning disabilities.

[166] **Janet Ryder:** If we go to SCOVO and Mencap, I am sure that they have user groups and carer groups, and they have the mechanisms that we can feed into. I am sure that when the Committee on Equality of Opportunity undertook a review, it had a reference group of young disabled people. I think that it would be worth getting a copy of the review at least of the work that has been done by that committee and make contact with those in the reference group.

[167] **Peter Black:** I think that that would be helpful.

[168] **Janet Ryder:** The committee had young people come and take part as members of the committee, and they helped considerably when it came to questioning groups that gave evidence, as they are the users of services.

[169] **Peter Black:** A reference group would be useful for us to tap into and, when we send out consultations to groups such as Mencap, they will have a number of projects under way. It may well be worth stressing to them that we would like to get the views of their clients and users on this review. Maybe we can ask them specifically to feed that back to us and perhaps suggest people who might want to talk to us or provide their own evidence in some other way. That might be another way of doing it. Obviously, we will promote the review on the Assembly Parliamentary Service website, as we have in the past—whether anyone can find it on that website is another matter, of course. [*Laughter.*] However, we will try to do that as we have done in the past.

[170] We tried this type of interactive forum during the previous SEN review, and it did not really take off, because there were a number of issues. I am not sure whether it would work better with this particular group. It might be worth our looking at that again. The issue last time, I think, was ensuring that we had a number of people who were committed to going every day and stimulating discussion. People posted, and then nothing happened, and then the thing just died down. So, there are issues in that regard, and I am sure that we will want to look at that as another way forwards.

[171] If Members are content with that general direction, we will try to bring a report to the next meeting with the terms of reference. We will try to pick up the points raised as part of this and get evidence-taking under way as soon as possible so that we can get the review in full swing. We will devote the best part of a meeting this term to taking evidence on that review. However, that has been made slightly more difficult by the fact that the Graham review has been postponed, and we have had to jig things around a bit. We will do our best on that.

[172] We will now take a break and come back at 10.55 a.m.. We are slightly early, but I hope that the representatives from the teachers' unions will be here by the time we come back. Thank you.

*Gohiriwyd y cyfarfod rhwng 10.39 a.m. a 10.59 a.m.
The meeting adjourned between 10.39 a.m. a 10.59 a.m.*

Hyfforddiant Cychwynnol Athrawon—Adolygiad Furlong Initial Teacher Training—Furlong Review

[173] **Peter Black:** Welcome back to the Education and Lifelong Learning and Skills Committee. I welcome the representatives of the various teachers unions: Dr Philip Dixon, the director of the Association of Teachers and Lecturers Cymru, Geraint Davies, the secretary of the National Association of Schoolmasters and Union of Women Teachers, Dafydd Morgan, the senior vice president of NASUWT, Dr Heledd Hayes, the education officer for the

National Union of Teachers Cymru and Rhys Williams, the political communications and campaigns officer for the National Union of Teachers Cymru. Welcome to the committee. I will ask the presenters to put their case one by one, and we will then open the session up for questions. I remind you that we are taking a verbatim record of the meeting, which will be available to you in due course to have a look over and it will then appear on the web pages of the committee for the public to look at it. We will start with the NUT, because you have a PowerPoint presentation, which is a first for this committee in the new building. We have all the technology lined up, and I assure you that it will work. I ask you therefore to start the proceedings, and then we will work our way through the other presenters.

11.00 a.m.

[174] **Dr Hayes:** Diolch am y gwahoddiad i ddod yma'r bore yma. Bydd y cyflwyniad yn Saesneg, ond byddaf yn hollol hapus i dderbyn cwestiynau mewn un o'r ddwy iaith ar ôl y cyflwyniad. Mae arnaf ofn na fydd hwn yn gweithio. Bydd rhywbeth yn mynd o'i le, gallwch fentro.

Dr Hayes: Thank you for the invitation to come along this morning. The presentation will be in English, but I will be happy to take questions in either language after the presentation. I am afraid that this might not work. Something is sure to go wrong, you can bet on it.

[175] You have already seen our submission to the Furlong review, so I just wanted to stress a few points very quickly. On induction, we agree that, last year in particular, and for the previous two years as well, far too many newly qualified teachers could not find posts to allow them to complete the now statutory induction year. This is a tremendous waste and a great discouragement for those affected and for others to become teachers. So, we need to get the numbers right and then we can guarantee induction for all newly qualified teachers, as is currently the case in Scotland.

[176] It is predicted that the number of pupils needing school places will fall by 50,000 over the next decade, but we need to balance that with the fact that teaching is an ageing profession. I have been looking at recent General Teaching Council for Wales figures, which were published last week, and over a third of teachers—in fact, fairly close to 40 per cent—who are registered with the council in Wales, are over the age of 50. Almost 50 per cent are over the age of 45. I will not go on, but you can see the problem—it is an ageing profession. Most teachers will tell you that having a mix of ages on a school's teaching staff is good for a school. I will not go into that. Be that as it may, we will need many teachers soon, as many will retire. We will lose some a bit earlier, because of illness, and others will choose to go a little earlier.

[177] As we all know, our coal exports have disappeared, but it is a fact that we are still exporting many teachers. Many come to Wales for their training with no intention of staying and go back to Ireland or England. If anyone goes to teaching fairs, they will see there authorities such as Redbridge, Greenwich, East Sussex and West Sussex—I could carry on naming them—offering attractive little gifts to our student teachers, and, of course, the possibility of work. We cannot afford a situation in which we pay for the training, but do not benefit from the outcomes.

[178] Pension changes are a bit of a moot point at the moment, but let us try to think creatively. Just one idea that I will throw out is that many teachers nearing retirement would be delighted to mentor younger teachers, thus sharing their expertise with those young teachers, and getting a bit of a boost themselves and a bit of a change after years of teaching. I am sorry to mention Scotland again, but, currently, the Government there is preparing to pay for a number of teachers who are nearing retirement to do a Voluntary Service Overseas year, and replace them, for their year away, with people who are doing their induction year. I am sure that there are lots of other possibilities that we could explore in Wales, but why not give

thought, in the meantime, if nothing else, to providing perhaps just one or two teachers to our link country, Lesotho?

[179] We will need more teachers for the workload and for the 14-19 learning pathway and the foundation phase. The foundation phase action plan states:

[180] ‘With the proposed increase in the adult/child ratio within the Foundation Phase, there will be a demand for a larger workforce of well-trained teachers and support staff who have an understanding of good early years practice and pedagogy.’

[181] I have added everything in between, because, of course, when we wish to see standards improving, we must provide the teachers who will bring that improvement into effect.

[182] Where will the teachers come from to make the ideal of ‘Iaith Pawb’ a reality? Even if we accept that we are producing too many teachers, we have serious shortages in some areas, especially of teachers who can teach through the medium of Welsh, and in certain subjects, notably physics. So, where is our agency to encourage teacher recruitment in Wales in particular ways and for certain subjects? However, there are other issues too, it is not only a matter of language, or indeed, subject.

[183] The recent General Teaching Council for Wales figures do not contain overall figures for teachers from ethnic minorities, but the information is now gathered for those completing their induction. Between September 2004 and August 2005, of the 1,033 teachers who achieved the induction standard, only 14 did not fit into the category of ‘white British’—the bigger category—or ‘white other’. That is slightly over 1 per cent. That does not reflect the multi-cultural society in which we live.

[184] For the twenty-first century and beyond, we need schools that are fit for the twenty-first century and beyond. If you look at that, you might well think first of school buildings, and why not? But what about thinking too about the numbers of teachers and pupils? We are having a push in Wales to bring all school buildings up to scratch by 2010, but, as yet, we have not considered with any seriousness the number of teachers that we need. It tends to be reaction at the moment; falling pupil numbers brings a reaction that we must cut back on the number of teachers, but do we need to do so? You would expect someone from a teacher’s union to argue for smaller class sizes—I am aware of that—but there is a current emphasis on personalised learning for each pupil and student. There are a range of activities now available where pupils do not sit at rows of desks listening to one teacher, so we need to look again at what is desirable as a teacher to pupil ratio.

[185] As we all work together, I hope, to create a successful Wales, we must remember that our most powerful weapon or tool—we can argue about how to translate the word ‘*arf*’—is education: *gorau arf, arf dysg*.

[186] **Peter Black:** Thank you. I now ask the NASUWT to make a presentation.

[187] **Mr Davies:** Yr wyf yn ategu’r hyn a ddywedodd Heledd, ein bod yn croesawu’r cyfle i wneud cyflwyniad i’r pwyllgor. Mae’r mater gerbron yn fater pwysig ac allweddol i’r pwyllgor hwn ac i’r Cynulliad yn ei gyfanrwydd.

Mr Davies: I echo Heledd’s comments that we welcome the opportunity to make a presentation to the committee. The issue under consideration is an important and key issue for this committee and the Assembly as a whole.

[188] We have to get this right, Chair. At the outset, I will introduce an element of disappointment. From the perspective of the NASUWT, we feel that the Furlong review and

the ensuing report, and also the paper presented to this committee on 29 March this year, have not fully addressed the issues that need to be addressed. It would be far too easy to adopt a knee-jerk or gut reaction to the issues that appertain to initial teacher training in Wales. As Heledd has already done, let me underline the fact that the whole exercise should never be a number-crunching game. You will see from our written presentation, which we sent in advance of today, that we also quote the figures of the General Teaching Council for Wales. As we have already heard, the figures make for alarming reading, in terms of the needs of the profession for the next 20 to 30 years. Teaching is an ageing profession. In view of that fact, it is disappointing to note that Professor Furlong and the Minister have come to a conclusion that there is a need to reduce the annual initial teacher training intake for the next few years.

11.10 a.m.

[189] There are many challenges on the horizon that will require extra teachers in our classroom—provision for 14 to 19-year-olds is one. We have already heard about the foundation phase this morning. That is a tremendous challenge—it is one of the flagship policies of this Assembly for the next 10 to 15 years. We need to get it right from the word go. Without the necessary person power, we will not get it right. One of the issues that currently concerns us as a union is that, with the roll-out of the foundation phase from September 2008, we should already be in a position where we are training our new teachers—not just training those who are currently in the profession, but the new entrants to the profession.

[190] Over the last couple of weeks, I have done a straw poll of our teacher-training establishments and their proposals in terms of the foundation phase for next September, but I have drawn a blank and that, to the NASUWT, is a matter of some concern. The proposals are not there and, as I said, we have to get this right from 1 September 2008; otherwise we will end up with egg on our faces. The 14-19 agenda has been mentioned before. This will mean tremendous change in our classrooms over the next decade, which will mean retraining, but it should also mean the training of our future generation of teachers. That is not currently happening.

[191] I am conscious of the time, Chair, but I will just touch on one or two other issues, one of which is Welsh-medium provision. Coming back to the numbers game, if we are to cut back on the number of student teachers, we will, undoubtedly, on a pro rata basis, cut back on the number of potential teachers to teach through the medium of Welsh and to teach Welsh as a first or second language. That statement alone should trigger alarm bells in the minds of everybody sitting around this table. You will know from the foundation phase that the proposals—quite rightly, in my opinion—place a strong and definite emphasis on bilingualism. You will be aware of the demands of the proposals in ‘Iaith Pawb’ to ensure that Wales, in due course, becomes a truly bilingual society. I thoroughly, and properly, applaud those sentiments but we need the tools to deliver, colleagues. The tools in this case are the people, the teachers, the individuals who can stand properly and confidently in front of our classrooms over the next 10 to 20 years.

[192] We currently have a policy that ensures that Welsh is taught either as a first or second language in every primary and secondary school in Wales. That has meant a drain on resources, and far too many teachers are being coerced to teach an element of Welsh in our primary and secondary schools. That is not acceptable. Why are they being coerced and put in that situation? It is because there are insufficient numbers of teachers to properly deliver.

[193] That brings me onto the possibility of rationalising initial teacher training provision across Wales. I am glad that the Minister, in this case, has not seen fit to adopt a particular model, because it is a complicated issue. You will recall that Professor Furlong suggested in the Furlong report that Welsh-medium ITT provision should be concentrated in the south-

west and the north-west. That, on the surface, appears to be a logical decision, does it not? However, to me, it would be a big mistake, because, as we all know, at present, the greatest demand for teachers to teach Welsh as a subject or through the medium of Welsh is here in the south-east corridor of Wales. We need to ensure that we maintain bilingual and Welsh-medium provision here, somewhere in the south-east. Students do not travel these days. You would be amazed at the large number of students who are quite happy to live at home, for financial reasons, and just travel down the road to the nearest establishment. So, I would urge you, colleagues, not to fall into that trap and think that Welsh Wales is to the west and to the north-west. We need to ensure that there is provision throughout Wales.

[194] Finally, just as a quick follow-up in terms of induction, Heledd was absolutely right—and I am glad, in this respect, that the Minister has acknowledged this—that we need to ensure that newly qualified teachers are given a proper start to their careers. Induction was introduced some two or three years ago and I think that it would be fair to say that everyone around this table will be supportive of the concept.

[195] Those who have gone through induction have welcomed that stepping stone in their career. However, there is currently an increasing cohort of newly qualified teachers for whom the sand is slowly but surely trickling through the glass. They are in danger, Chair, of missing the timetable or the deadline, because there is a scarcity of jobs for them in which to properly do their induction period. I add that as a word of warning; it may be outside the remit of this committee, but it is becoming an increasing concern to our younger newly qualified teachers. They are afraid of missing the boat; they are afraid that they will not be able to complete their induction within five years, as the regulations currently permit.

[196] I will leave it at that at this stage. I am sure that my colleague, Dafydd Morgan, will be delighted to answer your questions later. Diolch yn fawr.

[197] **Peter Black:** Thank you. May I ask Dr Philip Dixon from ATL to make a presentation?

[198] **Dr Dixon:** Good morning. We submitted a very brief paper to the committee which I would like to run through. A few other concerns have also come to light in further discussions on this matter more recently.

[199] We were delighted, perhaps because it was so rare in the report, by Furlong's acknowledgement of his own limitations in regard to the statistics; we thought that he was refreshingly honest. Any modelling for future demand really has to take to heart his strictures that the statistical work has to be done properly. Heledd and Geraint have touched on that, with anecdotal tales about the bulge, the age bulge, sickness and so on, and those have to be factored in. We cannot afford to get this wrong. We could plan on rather dodgy statistics and then find ourselves having to import teachers at certain stages into certain subjects. I am glad to see that the Minister has already begun that process, but the statistical work that the Assembly has to undertake has to be a priority, and we were very glad to see that Professor Furlong welcomed that, saying that we cannot afford to get this wrong and that the hard grind of the statistics needs to be done. That is my first point; as I say, we have touched on that in our paper.

[200] My second point is that we give the reconfiguring of the schools of education a cautious welcome. We thought that a concentration, reducing the numbers of schools of education to three, could help to develop a research profile in Wales, deepening that research profile, and helping to develop a worldwide academic research profile. We would be concerned about redundancies, which I will come back to later, but we think that this is an opportunity for the development of a much stronger research culture than has, perhaps, existed hitherto in Wales's schools of education. We would like to support that, although we

think that it needs to be properly resourced.

11.20 a.m.

[201] The third point that really excited us was what we call ‘the new degree’—the pre-professional degree. We thought that it was something that merited very serious attention. As the twenty-first century education agenda develops, pastoral and social-welfare concerns are now very much bound up with the education agenda. We thought that this was one of the ways in which access to the education profession, which is something greater than just teaching, could be broadened. We thought that this was a way forward in that regard and that it was a way of strengthening the links between pastoral and social provision and education in its more pure forms. So, we think that that should be looked at. Colleagues in England tell me that this is something that English institutions are starting to develop. I also think that the University of Wales Institute, Cardiff has begun work on this and already offers an education studies degree; we would not want to see that kicked into touch. It will need much greater research and investigation, but this is something that we should seriously consider.

[202] Some other concerns have come to light as we have discussed this matter. I think that we have already touched upon some in Geraint’s and Heledd’s presentations. We question, and we have questioned in another institution not too far away, this automatic link between a reduction in the number of pupils and a reduction in the number of teachers. As Heledd and Geraint have eloquently said, the foundation phase and the 14-19 provisions seem to require extra teachers, so that would have to be factored into any future modelling.

[203] We understand the financial implications of training teachers who we then export, but we would not want Wales to become too insular. We would not want it to be the case that we did not attract students from England who could contribute to Welsh education, or that we did not attract returnees who have perhaps trained here and gone to England, because they make important contributions. Also, we wondered whether there was a certain amount of curtailment of personal freedom here and how you would manage to say to those who are undertaking a teaching degree, ‘Right, you must sign on the dotted line now and guarantee that you will teach in Wales or we will not take you onto our course’. We think that, in some ways, the exporting of teachers is something that benefits a much greater polity and that we would receive returns from. Exporting is a strength in that sense. We need to be careful that we do not become too insular and just plan for our own workforce needs.

[204] Concerns were expressed by our members who are engaged in initial teacher training about redundancies, and also, even if there were guarantees that there would be no redundancies, about what one person referred to as ‘forced relocation’. So, we are concerned about that and would want to see proposals on that at a future date.

[205] We also think that every institution in the reconfigured set-up should be involved in research, and extra resources need to be put in so that we can develop a culture of research, which will not just happen overnight. We welcome the suggestion about a guaranteed induction year, but we would have concerns about the great turnover and the possible destabilising effect that that could have in schools. This must also not become a source of cheap labour for schools in terms of plugging gaps.

[206] As I said, we welcome the pre-professional degree, but that requires greater investigation. We are also concerned, as ITT provision is reconfigured, about the questions regarding governance that might arise. If you have a split-campus site, for example, one at UWIC and one down the road at Caerleon, who would those institutions be responsible to in terms of university governance?

[207] Those are our concerns and the things that we welcome in the Furlong report. I

commend what we said for further consideration. We are very committed to developing, as my colleagues have said, what is best, not just for the teachers of Wales, but for the children of Wales. That, I am sure, is the primary concern that we all have.

[208] **Peter Black:** Thank you. I invite Members to ask questions. Janet?

[209] **Janet Ryder:** It is interesting to hear the points that have been raised; I would certainly agree with a lot of them. It would be very good to be able to offer a guaranteed induction place for people who have trained. That is why I have slight concerns if we are talking about moving to a pre-professional degree, because, in that case, you must be able to guarantee a place on the postgraduate certificate in education course. I know that, in England, that is not necessarily the case and that there are people, therefore, who are training who think that they are on a route into education, but who cannot get in, because they cannot get onto that second degree course as the places are not there for them. If you were to look at that degree, you would have to look at ensuring that the pathways were there for people to be able to move through into education. I would be interested to hear the reaction of the NASUWT and the NUT and their opinion on the development of a pre-professional degree and the impact that that might have on the BA, and whether we should continue with that or phase it out and look at a new way of training teachers.

[210] I was particularly interested to hear what you said about training for the needs of Wales, particularly with regard to the foundation phase, because, when I have visited schools that are running some of the pilot schemes for the foundation phase, every headteacher has pointed out that we are not currently training the teachers of tomorrow to deliver the foundation phase. A great deal of work has to be done on that. We have the opportunity to look at the structure of the training in Wales, but we have to look at delivering what Wales needs in that foundation phase. That is why we have to be careful with what we are doing with the numbers. I totally agree with that point. If we are too restrictive, we will not meet the aspirations either of the foundation phase, of the workload agreement implications or the implications of the 14-19 pathways. I think that these have to be carefully considered. I was alarmed at the massive reductions outlined in the initial Furlong report. I agree that we have to carefully assess the future needs of the teaching profession in Wales to ensure that we are delivering for the curriculum as it develops in Wales.

[211] I would welcome your views on the new forms of training and on what needs to be done to the training itself, that is, to the content of the courses. What do we need to look at? We have talked about this new degree, but I do not know whether we have looked at the needs of Wales with regard to the foundation phase and the development of the pathways within education in Wales. I would also ask you all to look again and perhaps to make some further comments on the emphasis in the Furlong report on regionalisation, especially the tying in of schools to training colleges. I can see that, in a sense, there is a cross-over of professional development and that you can get lecturers more easily working with schools, but, in some cases, that is developing anyway. I very much like the NUT idea that we use teachers with a great deal of experience and who are perhaps still working in the classroom, to go back to work as mentors alongside new teachers. I think that that is something that would benefit everyone. However, I would like some more comments on how we can develop the training structure in Wales, and whether we should look at a regional structure or, as some of you have indicated, at maintaining the opportunity of training throughout Wales.

[212] **Mr Davies:** Thank you for those comments and for your endorsement of what we have said so far. You touched on a number of important issues. One factor that I did not refer to in my oral presentation, but which we touch upon in our written presentation, is that, as a union, we are not in favour of doing away with the undergraduate course. I was delighted to read in the report of 29 March that that is not the intention of the Assembly.

[213] I am of the opinion that a nine-month PGCE course does not properly prepare a teacher for the classroom. To an extent, I speak from recent personal experience, because my daughter undertook a three-year course at Trinity College Carmarthen. She finished that course in 2003. It was an excellent introduction to the world of teaching. There was an opportunity to undertake five different periods of teacher training in five different schools, and to work with different age groups within those schools. That is something that you cannot do in a short period of eight to nine months.

11.30 a.m.

[214] With the changes that are upon us, the delivery of the foundation phase will come with experience. However, you need to have that experience before you step into the classroom as a full-time teacher, do you not? We cannot throw teachers in at the deep end any more. Those of us who are still teachers—as Dafydd is—and who were teachers will tell you that we were, in the main, thrown in at the deep end. We went along, did our degree, and then we just trundled along for another few months doing teacher training and, lo and behold, reality hit us when we stepped into the classroom as full-time teachers the following September. Therefore, I would urge the committee, and the Assembly in due course, to think seriously before doing away with the undergraduate provision—the three-year course that we have at present.

[215] We need to think long and hard about what is included in those courses. I am tempted to say that we almost need a national syllabus or curriculum for our teacher training establishments, to ensure that they deliver the essential information in terms of the Welsh baccalaureate, the 14-19 pathways, and the foundation phase. I am still concerned that too many of our students leave these establishments without the necessary background information in respect of these important developments. I am certain that teacher training establishments will change as a result of this review. They must change, and they need to change, in order to come with us, if you like, along the new path of what education in Wales will be over the next 10 to 20 years.

[216] Therefore, there is much work to be done. I have hopefully answered some of your points.

[217] **Mr Morgan:** I will add two things, if I may. One issue that is cropping up at present is transition. Unfortunately, some of the courses offered by initial teacher training institutions do not bridge the gap between primary and secondary education, and that needs to be considered further. I have been teaching for over 38 years, and, when I started, I was junior-secondary trained. What happened in the primary sector and the secondary sector then was far better than it is now, with that kind of artificial division between the primary and the secondary stages. Therefore, ITT institutions need to consider that.

[218] Secondly, I fully concur with what everyone has said about having the experience in the schools to mentor and support trainee teachers. Where that is done well, there are good links between the higher education institution and a well-experienced individual. That mentoring time needs to be made available in the school setting, and not at the end of the day, after you have been fully committed all day, with perhaps an hour left to see how things have gone. You need to have a far more hands-on situation in schools to help mentor students. I am talking about an institution that has a large number of students every year and which has done very well.

[219] **Dr Dixon:** To reply to one of your points, Janet, I can see, as you say, the problems with the pre-professional degree, in that students cannot then get places in England on a PGCE course. However, it is a question of where the problems arise, is it not? We have people on PGCE courses who then cannot move on to induction. That is why the planning

must be carefully thought through. That is why the statistics in this must be 110 per cent certain—I know that that is not statistically correct—and we must think that through carefully. However, once you have done that, there would not be a problem with ensuring PGCE places, which would then lead on to induction and having a high chance of employment. However, that would have to be planned out.

[220] On the relationship between schools and training colleges, from speaking to colleagues who teach at training colleges, I know that that is easier or more difficult depending where they are. It is not difficult for those who are in the large, urban centres of population, or who have access to the urban centres of population, to find schools that take on trainee teachers. The problems arise in some of the more rural providers, and the transport costs and all the other things involved in that make it problematic. Again, that would need to be considered, and perhaps there would have to be some amount of possibly unequal funding to make it fairer for some providers in the more rural areas in ensuring that their students receive some sort of hands-on preparation and training in their locality.

[221] **Dr Hayes:** I will go back to the very new and radical idea of changing the initial degree altogether. I would not be happy to say this morning, ‘Yes, let us go for it’, or, ‘No, we do not want it’, because I think that much more thought needs to be given to the matter. I would stress that it is not getting rid of one degree and having another, but it is a new concept; it is a new degree that would prepare people for going into teaching, but also for a whole range of other possibilities in relation to working with children. We need to look at that, because we say all the time that we are short of this, that and the other as regards children, let alone teachers. People would then go on to do their PGCE, so they should, at that point, be extremely well prepared to become teachers, or they might go on to do a year’s course to specialise in a different way.

[222] May I just emphasise one thing? We do not take research capacity seriously enough in Wales. It was John Furlong who, some years ago, led a report on the educational research capacity in Wales. I was a member of the report steering committee and I was proud to have been a member; I am only sorry that the report has not been taken up in a more extensive way. At times, we find that we want experts on this and that and, all too often, we go outside Wales to look for them. However, we do have the capacity and we really must build on that.

[223] May I also clarify one point because I do not want any comeback on this? I certainly would not like to see teacher training, whatever form it takes in the future—three-year or one-year courses, or whatever else there may be—being considered insular. I would not like to see that for one moment. We have to look at reality as well. Some years ago, I was working in the Eurydice Unit for England, Wales and Northern Ireland, based at the National Foundation for Educational Research in Slough. I was well aware of what was happening in higher education in other European countries—it was part of my duties to collate information and so on. Of course, we all know that according to European law, it has to be open to everybody, but there are ways of cutting down and handicapping people to stop them attending courses if it is felt that they are oversubscribed. I would not want to see that for a moment; I thoroughly believe in the European concept of higher education being open to all European citizens. Nevertheless, the fact is that people come to Wales for training without any intention of staying here. Perhaps we need to look a little at refining that, not stopping it altogether, but realising that we, as a country, cannot afford to subsidise a country that is doing better than us economically, as far as the training of teachers is concerned.

[224] Induction should not be a source of cheap labour, and it would not be so under our proposals. Induction would actually cost money, but I think that it would be money well spent. I think that I am getting old—as I said, teaching is an ageing profession—and I am not sure what other points were raised, but perhaps someone can remind me of them. I have notes here, but they are not making a great deal of sense at the moment.

[225] You asked about the content of ITT courses. We have been saying for a long time that the course content tends to be overly geared to the content of the national curriculum, rather than to the more general art of pedagogy and looking after the whole pupil, be that personal and social care or whatever. It should not simply be about making sure that teachers provide every little bit that is mentioned in the national curriculum. However, the curriculum has changed a lot over the last few years and loosened up to allow more freedom.

[226] **Christine Chapman:** May I just pursue Helen's point about the content of ITT courses? Does the panel have views on whether there is enough emphasis in ITT on management skills? When teachers go into the profession, I know that there are opportunities for training for headships and middle management, but I just wonder whether there is enough emphasis on management at the initial teacher training level. Bearing in mind that the teaching profession is changing such a lot, it is no longer just about the craft of teaching, which is vital, but I think that a successful teacher now is someone who also develops partnerships outside the educational establishment. It is also about people management and motivational skills, and I wonder whether we are doing enough on those things, even at the very early stages when teachers come in to the profession.

11.40 a.m.

[227] **Dr Hayes:** You make a very good point. Unfortunately, all too often, when we think of school management, our thinking tends to be connected to the higher echelons. You more or less stated that immediately on going in to your first job, you are a manager, to a certain extent. We are not just talking about managing pupils; we are talking about classroom assistants and all sorts of other help. So, I would perhaps call them 'people skills' in general, but with the emphasis on management. In just the same way, there is not enough about how you care for the pupils in the class—and I mean that in the very general sense—or about relating to your fellow workers.

[228] **Mr Davies:** To add to that very briefly, that is a crucial point, and greater emphasis is needed on such interpersonal skills in the future. Let me quote two quick examples. In the case of a primary teacher, he or she will often find himself or herself in a classroom with two or three classroom assistants, and that involves a managerial role, albeit at a low level. Looking at the foundation phase and the proposals in the pipeline for the pupil/teacher or pupil/adult ratio, again, an inexperienced teacher, two or three years down the line, once we have introduced the foundation phase, could very well find himself or herself having to manage daily a number of other adults who will be delivering the foundation phase in tandem. So, that is a point well made, and it needs to be well looked at. I come back to a point that I made earlier about a possible national syllabus or curriculum for our teacher training establishments to ensure that these skills are properly delivered.

[229] **Dr Dixon:** I am certainly not disagreeing with Geraint when I say that any national curriculum that we might develop—which would be a good idea—would have to be skills-based rather than being what we might call content or theory-based. We are now moving away in school curricula from saying, 'Here is a set body of knowledge that children need to know', to saying, 'Here are the skills that they need for life'. That has to be the same in teacher training provision; we need to focus more on the skills that the future teacher will need rather than saying, 'Well, they need this or that as a component, and they need this area of knowledge'. As Heledd rightly says, the national curriculum has skewed this, in some ways. It is a matter of what they need to know so that they can pass it on. We need to look at that more carefully, and realise that it is skills rather than theory or knowledge that should be paramount in the provision that we make for future teachers.

[230] **Irene James:** Carrying on from that, what sort of feedback have you had from

teachers about initial teacher training? How do they feel that it prepares them for teaching, and where do we need to look at making key improvements? Further to that, with the proposed reductions in ITT, do you think that this will channel teachers into vacancies for specific subjects, such as with Welsh-medium teaching?

[231] **Dr Dixon:** Again, if it is properly planned, it could. You have a certain amount of market forces, but you can have an influence on them, and planning is key in this regard. Sorry, I forgot your first point.

[232] **Irene James:** My first point asked what sort of discussions you have had with teachers about how they feel about the ITT training.

[233] **Dr Dixon:** By and large, the picture emerging is that those who have been through ITT more recently are happier with the provision that they received, and we seem to be getting it right. We are definitely travelling in the right direction, and it is now less content-based and more practice-based. From talking to younger teachers who have perhaps been through the process in the last three to five years, I know that their experience is that ITT has been much more helpful to them than it was for older teachers, so we are moving in the right direction. That does not mean that there is no room for improvement, but that seems to be the general picture.

[234] **Jane Davidson:** I will just make a general point of clarification. The committee will remember that the reason we did not look at issues around content in terms of the Furlong review was because we were conducting the consultation separately. We spent the best part of two years consulting on the issue around the qualified teacher status standards in order to ensure that they are a Welsh national set of standards operating effectively across all our higher education institutions—which they are, and they have been broadly supported.

[235] **Mr Morgan:** From our point of view, when we talk to students and to those who have qualified and are about to start their jobs, we run seminars. In some ways, we try to highlight the practicalities and the potential trips and hazards that might occur in the first job, as well as bringing them up to date with the pay and conditions, conditions of service and everything along those lines. That seems to be amiss sometimes when we talk to students who come to schools. In our seminars, we provide our young members with an opportunity to discuss their roles and responsibilities and the difficulties that could occur.

[236] Within the school, as part of the student programme, as well as for newly qualified teachers, we also run a whole series of various hour-long workshops to bring them up to speed with what is happening in schools. I totally agree with my colleague from the Association of Teachers and Lecturers that it is skills-based issues that are needed—the skills of being a teacher in the classroom, not the content. Most of the teachers' knowledge of content is very good; it is the interpersonal-relationship skills and classroom-management skills that are the key issues that need to be highlighted, and it is only when you are in the classroom that you learn those skills and how to put your own views and personality on things. You cannot teach that, as such. You cannot say, 'This is how you will do it'. It is about giving them the opportunity, and I welcome that. On that basis, students from universities in Wales and in the west of England use the school that I teach at for student training, and there is no difference in the way that they are prepared, but there is a lack of knowledge about those pupil-management aspects of it and the relationship between them and their colleagues. That needs to be developed further.

[237] **Dr Hayes:** I agree. The general response that we get from our members is that they are satisfied with their teacher training. However, I add that it is difficult at times to know what credence to give to this, as these are people who enter teaching because they want to and they are enjoying the work very much. Perhaps it is a few years down the line that they look

back and think, ‘Well, actually, I enjoyed that and I thought that it was good, but nevertheless—’. It is difficult to do that now, because it is changing all the time. It is difficult to ask people in their thirties and forties how they would change it, because things have changed in the meantime.

[238] It would be interesting to have much more of a gathering of figures about where people end up having done their postgraduate certificate of education or whatever, both as regards work and country, killing two birds with one stone. We would then know where people go outside Wales and how they do. It is a bit difficult, as it is not easy to track people down at the best of times, but we would then know what percentage of teachers stay in Wales and, just as importantly, what percentage stay in teaching. The figures that we have seen in Wales indicate that a very large number of people leave the profession within the first five years of teaching. Why is that? We need to track that down, because, if we spend on ITT, we need to make certain that we get the return for the money, whether by keeping people in Wales—but let us not go back to that one now—or by keeping them in teaching. We do not want to straitjacket people. I do not know whether it is still the case, but in France some years ago, teachers had to sign up and agree, if they did their teacher training, to teach for a minimum of five years, I think, barring any stops for pregnancies, illness and so on. I do not want to see people put in straitjackets at all. However, we want to see answers to questions such as why people leave, what we can do to stop that drain, and what we can do to make the most of the money that we are spending, for we are spending a great deal of money on this.

11.50 a.m.

[239] **Irene James:** I welcome the comments that Heledd made, and I do not want to see the straitjackets that were in place 70 or 80 years ago in Wales reintroduced. So, as I said, I hope that you are right and that they do not come back.

[240] **William Graham:** On that point, I am horrified that anyone should suggest that we return once again to this idea of ‘Fortress Wales’. If we already have a recognised excellence in ITT in Wales, I want to see that developed; I think that, broadly, the committee generally supports that view. I want to see our teachers in demand throughout the United Kingdom, the European Union and the world. In the same way, the courses will remain in great demand, and will, perhaps, have to be expanded in the future. Let us seize this opportunity. I endorse the remarks made in all the reports on that, though I also acknowledge that there are institutions, such as Carmarthen and Newport, which recruit a substantial number of students locally, several of whom go back into their local communities. That has to be beneficial. I endorse too what Dr Hayes says about the necessity to learn why people leave the profession. That is absolutely vital, but I do not want to see us being insular in any form and certainly not giving out straitjackets.

[241] I also endorse the remark about skills and experience. That goes for almost all jobs, but particularly for teaching. Speaking from experience as a chair of public school governors, a lack of experience is no good to employers either. You must have experience and skills to meet all the criteria. To return to the report, I ask the compère today whether the proposed timescale is correct. If not, what impact will it have on ITT providers, students and the teaching profession generally?

[242] **Peter Black:** We shall start with NASUWT.

[243] **Mr Davies:** That is a very good question. I was hoping that someone else would be called to answer first. *[Laughter.]* We must not fall into the trap of believing that we need to move posthaste to make changes simply because there has been a review and there are proposals on the table. Going back to the report that was presented at the end of March, I am glad to note that the Minister has taken that very point on board. Caution is of the essence

here. We need to do this step by step. We need to do it constructively and we need to do it with the co-operation of all concerned—the teacher training institutions, schools, the young people who will provide the teaching force of the future, the Assembly and the unions.

[244] On one aspect of the timescale and the decision that has already been put into place regarding the reduction in the number of ITT students, I will deliberately repeat myself and say that we are concerned about that. That seems to have been accepted without the necessary and required research into a model of the type of profession that we will need, not just five or 15 years down the road; we must remember that the 18-year-old students now entering the institutions will be the teachers of the next 40 years. So, we need to ensure that we do not adopt a knee-jerk reaction to timescales.

[245] **Mr Morgan:** To add to that, it is important that we look at the timeframe for this, as far as teacher training is concerned, in the context of what is happening in the schools and the age profile of the staff. When pupil numbers are dropping in schools and in local authorities, the tendency is that young teachers do not get the jobs, which is difficult. Making an older teacher redundant is far more expensive than making a young teacher redundant, and that, in itself, is an issue that needs to be looked at when planning for the succession of teachers into the job. The older end needs to be looked at to help older teachers who need to leave the profession to do so with some form of dignity. You need to look at the complete picture, not just the initial teacher training.

[246] **Dr Hayes:** I agree that we should not go for a knee-jerk reaction, because I share the concerns about the fact that it is an ageing profession. I have already mentioned that. I find the balance difficult to decide on, because on the one hand I do not want to see what we have seen over the last two or three years, which is a lot of people getting their initial NQT and failing to find a post that gives them induction. It is a waste of money, and it is dreadful for those involved, who had thought, not that there was perhaps a guarantee of a post, but that there was a high likelihood of there being one. I do not want to see that happening again. On the other hand, neither do I want to lose the expertise that we have in our training institutions. We need to use it to improve our education system for the future. I am sorry if I sound like I am sitting on the fence, but I find it difficult—as I am sure others do—to get the two sides of the equation to balance out. We already have quite a number of people not finding work, and we cannot have that again. The number is far fewer than those produced by the institutions, because, as I said before, certain people do their training in Wales with no intention of staying, as they have the right to do. I cannot remember the figures, but let us say for the sake of argument that we had 380 people registered last year with the GTCW who could not find induction. In fact, we would have produced another 300 to 400 on top of that who have disappeared to wherever. They are very rough figures, and they may well be wrong, but that at least gives a flavour of what is happening.

[247] **Dr Dixon:** There are two things that I would say, in largely agreeing with what has been said. There is a tremendous disincentive, as Heledd mentioned, in someone qualifying and not being able to get induction. There are shorter-term measures that could probably be taken to try to tackle that. On the longer-term questions of timescale for a reduction in the numbers entering, it goes back to what we have all said before—we must know that the statistics are completely watertight, and that we have clear statistics on wastage and possible future events that may impact on the number of teachers needed, or on people leaving the profession. We seem to be lacking statistical data about how many teachers we are exporting. We must have those statistics, and, if it takes a year or two for that to be done, it will be time well spent. The old Latin phrase is *festina lente*—you go quickly slowly. You have to get the statistical stuff in place first, so that your planning is firmly grounded. I do not think that we should be in any rush on this. We can take some shorter-term measures to ensure that we have a guaranteed induction year, and so on, but I would rather see us take a longer timescale than take a shorter one and get it wrong, and cause tremendous problems in five, six or seven

years' time.

[248] **Peter Black:** Minister, you wanted to come in on this point.

[249] **Jane Davidson:** I am grateful for that, because this committee has already looked at the report that I tabled on 29 March. The report makes it clear—I will quote directly from it, because it deals with the point that has been made this morning—that there are concerns about how far and how quickly reduction should be made.

[250] ‘The report recommends that plans should be revised, year on year, between now and 2010 as more precise information on supply and demand becomes available. We will carry out an interim assessment of numbers based on present information to help verify background data for setting the 2007-08 intake targets. Based on the outline working assumptions ... we will also provide indicative targets for years beyond that up to 2010-11. However, these figures will be very much in outline only and may be subject to noticeable changes depending on the outcomes of our examination of data collection improvements.’

[251] In the short-term ITT change plan, we laid out clearly that the exercise would be carried out by the Statistical Directorate during this year to examine the Welsh data aspects of the Department for Education and Skills teacher-supply model, and the scope that might exist for enhancing the inputs and the outputs from the model to add data from the Assembly and external sources, such as the Higher Education Statistics Agency, the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales and the GTCW's register, which is more specific to and reflective of issues of concern in Wales. So, I thought it was important to remind us of the context to which we all agreed, in a sense, last time, which is that there were things that we had to do quickly but that there is a longer-term agenda that will be based on having good evidence.

12.00 p.m.

[252] Clearly, it is not a knee-jerk reaction—and I do not think that anybody here would say that it was—to commission a five-star education expert to undertake a major review to advise the Assembly Government and for this committee to give these issues proper consideration in balance. However, the evidence in terms of the very large number of people who are not able to acquire jobs, particularly in the primary sector, and the evidence that you have all given about people who still worry that they cannot get through induction, because there are no future posts likely to come up in large numbers—again, particularly in the primary sector—means that we have to get this balance right and, as the Assembly Government, we want our institutions to become much stronger in the research agenda. I know that all the teacher unions support that. This is our opportunity to bring those areas together. However, I reassure anybody listening today that there is no knee-jerk reaction from the Assembly Government, and that is why I commend Alun Huws, who is here, and the other officials who focused on the short-term planning that we must take forward, and which we looked at last time. Then there is the longer-term planning, on which we will remain in discussion with all key partners as we move forward towards the five-year delivery mechanism. All of us would like that to give us guaranteed placements for newly qualified teachers and John Howson's vision of the teaching profession's not being a market but a vocation.

[253] **Peter Black:** I want to bring Jeff in. If you want to make any points in respect of what the Minister said, Mr Davies, you can do it as part of the answer to Jeff. So, I will bring Jeff in first and then you can answer them together.

[254] **Jeff Cuthbert:** Workforce planning and achieving the right balance between expectation and reality is critical for any occupational sector that takes itself seriously. I do not mean by that that we should dragoon people into certain occupational areas whether they

like it or not, but that there should at least be good-quality career guidance so that, if people decide that they are going to go into teaching and achieve a satisfactory result, there is a reasonable expectation that they will use their skills and knowledge properly in the learning profession. Particularly with the new developments that we have—you have referred to the 14-19 learning pathway, which is an extremely interesting and exciting development—other people will be involved in the learning experience, such as the learning coaches, all of whom should form part of this thinking.

[255] In terms of skills, I agree that any qualification, whether it is this pre-professional degree or whatever, must be heavily based on skills. You have to have an amount of underpinning knowledge there, as in any occupational area, but I agree that it should be skills based. The means of accessing information and people skills are key, and we are now trying to embrace those in the key skills agenda, particularly with regard to younger people.

[256] On the pre-professional degree, we have talked about qualified teachers leaving the profession, but, coming from the other direction, people who are currently in other industries may be attracted to the learning profession, particularly when you have the 14-19 learning pathways, and we may want to draw in experienced professionals from engineering, manufacturing, financial services and whatever, to give of their knowledge and expertise to young people, whether that is on the basis of longer-term secondments or whether they move completely into the profession. I would suggest that it is important that they also take part in a pre-professional degree. What thought do you think has been given to, if you like, credit transfer? In many areas of work, competency-based training is often the norm and people will have higher-level national vocational qualifications, which will include many of the transferable skills that we would like to see. So, has any thought at this stage been given to the specification of any new pre-professional degree, taking on board what has been learned elsewhere in other contexts?

[257] **Mr Davies:** I refer you to sections d) and e) and points 44 to 48 of our written submission, where we touch upon that. In fact, we concur with what you have just said, Jeff. There has to be a route from industry and commerce into teaching. You are absolutely right in terms of the changes that will come about with provision for 14 to 19-year-olds, the learning coaches and the like, and, indeed, with the Welsh bacculaureate. We are looking at a new scenario and a new climate.

[258] We are still of the opinion that teaching should and must remain a graduate occupation—that you would need a degree before you could become a teacher. Personally, I would support the transfer of credits that an individual might have accrued within industry or as part of another training process, and those being acknowledged and recognised within the profession. I am also of the opinion that there is a need to strengthen the graduate teacher programme, because that is one route to further attract individuals from industry. We need to attract the sort of individual who is not fed up with life in industry but who really wants to become a teacher. I have come across too many people who have said to me, ‘I spent 20 years in the electronics industry and I was burnt out’. We do not want those colleagues. We want the individuals who see teaching, as the Minister said a few minutes ago, as a vocation for them for the remainder of their working career. That is essential. Be it the 18-year-old, the 38-year-old, or the person from industry, we need to attract individuals of the highest calibre into the profession. We need to ensure that every pupil in Wales is taught by the best-quality teacher available.

[259] To go back briefly to the Minister’s earlier comments about this being a rolling programme, again, I would concur totally with her comments. I refer you to point 57—our very last point—in our written presentation, because we deem this to be an ongoing process, we propose, for your consideration, the establishment of an overarching or umbrella organisation within Wales to monitor developments in respect of ITT. You will say, ‘Yes, you

would say this', but such an umbrella organisation should and must include the teaching unions. This has to be an ongoing process. There has to be an ongoing dialogue. We welcome the dialogue this morning. It is a dialogue that needs to be continued within, shall we say, a suitable platform for the next five years or so, so that we get it right at the end of the day.

[260] **Dr Dixon:** I will just say quickly to the Minister that I welcome what she said and that I have read about the importance that you will be attaching now to gathering statistical data. It was just to give more power to your elbow and say how important that was.

[261] I agree that we need to look at a variety of different routes for the best—as Geraint says—to enter into the teaching profession, and into education as a whole, not just into teaching but as support staff, learning coaches and so on.

[262] There are now provisions made in various different ways for the accreditation of experience. I think that that again is something that a pre-professional degree may look at. Certainly, the graduate teacher programme could look at it with greater depth. It is a question of seeing the skills that people are bringing, how they are then able to use those skills in a different context, and how they are able to share those skills with youngsters. That is what we are talking about. Some imaginative thinking has been done and can be developed in this area to think about how people coming from industry from other experiences, who want to be an educational professional, can have their learning accredited, whether it has been in a formal or more informal setting. So, I would welcome those changes.

[263] As far as I can understand, I think that this area it is still fairly embryonic, but it is something that we need to be doing research on—and echoing the point that Heledd made, I think—whether we need the research capacity in Wales to be doing that to see what our needs are, and also what the skills that people are bringing in our context are. So, anything that builds up the research capacity in our present training providers is also to be welcomed and encouraged.

12.10 p.m.

[264] **Dr Hayes:** We would agree with that. I mentioned earlier—and I was not going to enter the argument—that most teachers say that a mix of ages is good in a school. Most teachers would also say that a mix of background experience is good because different people at different ages with different experiences all offer something very valuable to pupils. I have been a little disappointed this morning that no-one has gone back to the issue of background. We are desperately short in Wales of people from ethnic minorities. That is also another thing to offer those pupils in schools. They are role models, if you like, but they also have their own different experiences. I am sorry that that has not been picked up, because the figures that I read to you this morning from GTC Wales in no way reflect the multicultural society in which we all live from day to day, although that is not very well reflected in this room this morning—I include the two NUT delegates in that criticism.

[265] **Peter Black:** We are coming to the end of this session. Two Members wish to ask questions and I will pair them together so that we can use the time most effectively. Owen John will go first.

[266] **Owen John Thomas:** Mae gennyf sylwadau cyflym i'w gwneud ar yr hyn a ddywedodd Heledd. Pan oeddwn yn dysgu, yr oeddwn yn sylweddoli bod pob athro oedd yn helpu plant o gefndiroedd ethnig i wella eu Saesneg yn unieithog ac nid oedd yr un ohonynt yn dod o gefndir ethnig. Yr oedd **Owen John Thomas:** I have some brief comments to make on what Heledd said. When I was a teacher, I realised that all the teachers who assisted children from an ethnic background to improve their English were monolingual and none of them came from an ethnic background. There were many bright

llawer o blant galluog o gefndir ethnig yn y dosbarth, ac yr oeddwn yn gobeithio y byddai rhai yn symud ymlaen i fod yn athrawon ac i wneud y gwaith hwnnw yr oedd pobl eraill yn ei wneud, ond efallai ddim cystal ag y gallent hwy ei wneud.

children from ethnic backgrounds in the class, and I hoped that some would progress to become teachers and to undertake some of the work that others were undertaking, but perhaps not as effectively as they could.

[267] Yr ydym yn byw mewn Cymru newydd. Mae'r Cynulliad yn bodoli ers saith mlynedd. Bu i mi astudio cwrs yn y coleg i fod yn athro ysgol gynradd flynyddoedd yn ôl, sy'n eithaf gwahanol i gyrsiau ar gyfer pobl sy'n penderfynu arbenigo mewn un pwnc. Mae athrawon cynradd yn dysgu dwsin o bynciau. Bryd hynny, y rhagdybiaeth oedd y byddai siawns dda y byddai myfyrwyr yn mynd i Loegr i weithio. Heddiw, wrth gwrs, mae amryw ohonynt yn cael swyddi yng Nghymru ac mae 75 y cant, mwy neu lai, o fyfyrwyr yn dod o Gymru. Fodd bynnag, os edrychwch ar y cwricwlwm—mae sgiliau yn bwysig iawn, ond mae'n rhaid i chi gael gwybodaeth hefyd i'w phasio ymlaen i'r plant—mae'n seiliedig, fwy neu lai, ar y cwricwlwm mewn colegau yn Lloegr. Nid oes llawer yn y cwrs i wneud athrawon yn ymwybodol o'u Cymreigrwydd ac o ddiwylliant, hanes, daearyddiaeth a cherddoriaeth Cymru. Maent yn isel iawn ar yr agenda. Mae'n bwysig bod y cwricwlwm yn ein colegau addysg yn adlewyrchu hynny. Cefais fyfyrwyr yn fy nosbarth i o Gymru nad oeddynt yn gwybod enwau siroedd Cymru, hyd yn oed, a phob mathau o bethau eraill y byddech yn disgwyl i bobl eu gwybod. Mae pobl yn cwyno nad yw pobl yn cymryd llawer o ddiddordeb yn y Cynulliad; os ydynt yn cael addysg nad yw'n cydnabod y ffaith eu bod yn byw yng Nghymru, bydd hynny'n cael ei adlewyrchu. Mae'n bwysig ein bod yn edrych ar y cwricwlwm ac yn ei wneud yn fwy addas ar gyfer Cymru 2006 a'r dyfodol. Beth yw eich barn ar hynny?

We live in a new Wales. The Assembly has existed for seven years. I studied a college course to become a primary-school teacher some years ago, which is quite different to the courses for people who specialise in a particular subject. Primary-school teachers teach a dozen subjects. At that time, the assumption was that there would be a good chance that students would go to England to work. Today, of course, many of them find work in Wales and 75 per cent, more or less, of students come from Wales. However, if you consider the curriculum—skills are very important, but you also need knowledge to pass on to pupils—it is based, more or less, on the curriculum in English colleges. There is not much in the course to make teachers aware of their Welshness or of the culture, history, geography and music of Wales. They are very low down on the agenda. It is important that the curriculum in our education colleges reflects that. I have had students in my class from Wales who did not even know the names of the counties of Wales, and all sorts of other things that you would expect people to know. People complain that people do not take much interest in the Assembly; if they receive an education that does not acknowledge the fact that they live in Wales, that will be reflected. It is important that we look at the curriculum and make it more suitable for Wales in 2006 and in the future. What are your views on that?

[268] **Peter Black:** I will bring the Minister in first.

[269] **Jane Davidson:** I do not know whether it is a Pontypridd-inspired issue, Dafydd, but I agree with you about transition. There is the ability at the moment for teachers to teach across key stages 2 and 3. At the moment, our institutions have not focused on that area, but I would anticipate that, as the new transition planning arrangements come into place—and, of course, the first group of primary-school pupils under these arrangements who will go into secondary school will be there from 2007—there will be an increasing interest in teaching across the key stage 2/key stage 3 divide. However, our new QTS standards require people to have an understanding of the key stages either side of their teaching focus, which is important.

[270] Heledd, you rightly referred to an institution that has a fundamental pillar of equal opportunity. You quite rightly brought us back to the issue of ethnic minorities. It is also about teachers with disabilities and other groups poorly represented in the profession at the moment. John Furlong also drew this to our attention, and we will look at how to pick up these issues as we move into longer-term planning.

[271] My question to you all relates to something that Heledd said regarding the numbers of teachers who leave within the first five years. In my early meetings with you, we had discussions about the numbers leaving. We know from the 2005 school census that 9 per cent of teachers left primary schools, and 11 per cent left secondary schools with less than five years of experience. With your support, we introduced the new early professional development, because, as Geraint quite rightly pointed out, one of the major concerns for those of us who trained a long time ago was being dropped in at the deep end and not necessarily finding out whether you had finished your induction. The idea is that early professional development can give teachers adequate support for the next couple of years. As that has only been introduced relatively recently, we are probably unlikely to see the statistical benefit for a couple of years. However, in your role as unions, do you see that as useful in addressing that particular issue? Do you believe that the numbers will reduce as a result of the introduction of that unique Assembly initiative, which was supported by all unions in Wales?

[272] **Dr Hayes:** I am nodding away. In general terms, we are very supportive indeed. It is important not to be left on your own to get on with it, and that the attitude of, 'I learned through experience and hard knocks, so you will do the same', does not persist. The question of whether that was good for you or for the pupils in your care did not come into it. We certainly agree with that, and we hope that it will ameliorate the situation.

[273] However, going back to what other people have said, we hope that it does not put people in a straitjacket. There will always be people who decide that this is not for them, and we have to accept that, respect their decision, and make it as easy as possible for them to change to other subjects. On the content, I do not think that anyone has mentioned that Furlong recommends that anyone doing ITT in Wales should do a certain amount of study of the Welsh language. I wonder why he has put it in. I suspect that there are several reasons, not just the obvious one. It will be interesting to see people's reactions to that.

[274] **Mr Davies:** To answer the Minister's question, I think that early professional development will help over a long period of time. It is fair to say that the jury is still out on that, because we have only recently embarked on EPD. What concerns me in terms of the drop-out rate is that too many newly qualified teachers fail to find full-time posts. They are passed on from one supply job to another. Some are lucky if they get a period of maternity cover during their first year. Some will be on term-time only contracts—there may be a job in the school, but the system is manipulated. It is easy for such individuals to lose faith in the system and to lose faith in themselves.

[275] Going back to one of Heledd's points, the induction year should be guaranteed. I am delighted that the Minister has taken this on board. We all know that there are financial and other problems, but if we can achieve that goal, it will give every teacher, on leaving an ITT establishment, a grounding, a start, and a period of 12 months for them to find their feet. As I said, at the moment, there are too many demoralising factors affecting the development of a young teacher's career. We need to look carefully at that. There are no short-term answers to that, because of the market situation. However, the situation is demoralising for too many of our youngsters.

[276] **Peter Black:** Do you want to address Owen John's point?

12.20 p.m.

[277] **Mr Morgan:** It is important that people in Wales know their place in the world and about Wales, and about what Welshness—or whatever you want to call it—means. It is important that they know about the cultural aspect. Knowing our history and background and its diversity, and how we have adopted many people into Wales, as such, is an important point. However, we must put it in the context of Wales in the world, because many of the students that we teach, and the pupils in our schools, will make their lives outside Wales, because of greater opportunities on occasion, unfortunately. We must also bear in mind that, when we teach children, it is about Wales and its place in the world, and the opportunities that there are within our borders, as well as outside. We have an obligation to ensure that our pupils are aware of both in that way.

[278] One thing that has not been mentioned regarding ITT, which is still a concern to us as an organisation, is that there is not enough gender balance within the teaching profession. We need to make it more attractive, to get more men into the profession. That must also be addressed.

[279] **Dr Dixon:** To reply to the Minister, yes, the EPD will be useful. However, it is useful to plot, is it not, what has effect and what does not? What has come back to us when we have talked to those who have left the profession—we have done surveys of our past members, and some who have remained with us—are the two big things that are always flagged up, namely workload and behaviour. The workload reforms are having an effect and should lead to greater retention. Behaviour remains a key problem, and, as the agenda moves on, that is the next issue that needs to be focused on. However, at least anecdotally, talking to some of our younger members, the EPD seems to be helping them, compared with some of our older members.

[280] On Owen John's point, again it goes back to whether you teach by content. You can imagine setting up an ITT course in which you have the obligatory input about Wales and Welshness. As the education agenda, and our health agenda, and other things develop and devolve in Wales, and we become distinctive, those things are learned and picked up, not quite by osmosis, but in another way as well. It is important that we celebrate our distinctiveness, but it is not just something that will be done in the lecture hall.

[281] **Owen John Thomas:** Briefly on that, what happens when students are encouraged to teach things through subjects, such as history and so on, is that they will want to talk about, if it is November, Guy Fawkes, or it might be the plague of London, or Queen Victoria and all her children, and their names, and so on. Therefore, the whole system is being taught with the idea that it is England and Wales. We now have a National Assembly, and we should get the people of Wales to know more about their own country. It is not stultifying things at all—the people of Wales have gone all over the world, and we have a huge maritime tradition, and so on, but there are certain things that people should know about Wales. Students, when they come into the classroom should be able to follow the national curriculum in Wales. It includes many things about Wales, does it not? It is about access to these professional packages that you can get, where the whole history is in the wallet, which you can buy for £5.

[282] **Peter Black:** I suspect that, if I opened this up for debate, we could be here for another hour yet. I will allow Dr Dixon to finish.

[283] **Dr Dixon:** I take the point. However, we need to look at this in two ways. Yes, people need to know about their own country, and we need to know more especially, say, about Europe as well, and use those things also. It is a question of how people learn and pick things up. That is an interesting debate that we could get into. You could ask, and I think that

we have this with the UK Government, ‘What do you know to be British?’, and we could then have an endless discussion, and we would probably have various different opinions. However, it is difficult to say, ‘These are the things that you should know about Wales’. I can see that there are certain things that you should know, but a much broader discussion needs to take place, and it is a much broader experience than just saying, ‘These are key facts’. Most teachers will say that you can give pupils the facts, but how do they keep forgetting them? That is true of all of us—it is more the culture in which we live. As we grow and develop, and gain in confidence as a nation—and I think that we are doing that, with all the things that we see around us—so those things become, more or less, second nature to us.

[284] **Mr Davies:** May I say very briefly—

[285] **Peter Black:** Everyone wants to get a brief point in, but I am reluctant to get into this debate at this stage.

[286] **Mr Davies:** The scenario that was put forward this morning might have been the scenario that he was used to when he was still a headteacher, and in the classroom, some years ago, but I am afraid to say that the cocoon of the Assembly has somewhat nulled the brain, Owen John, with respect.

[287] Fe’ch atgoffaf mai cyflwyno’r I remind you that the introduction of the Curriculum Cymreig has been one of the great successes of the Assembly over the past six or seven years.
Cwricwlwm Cymreig oedd un o lwyddiannau
mawr y Cynulliad yn ystod y chwech neu
saith mlynedd diwethaf.

[288] The Curriculum Cymreig has engendered a great deal of the changes that Owen John alluded to and hoped for; most of them are already in the system.

[289] **Peter Black:** Now that you have made that point, I have to let Dr Hayes make her point.

[290] **Dr Hayes:** The Chair will be relieved to know that one of the points that I wanted to make was precisely what Geraint said about the Curriculum Cymreig, which we have always supported. It takes us out from our Welshness, into the world; that is the whole purpose of it. We cannot get out there until we understand ourselves. To finish on a nice note, I would like to compliment the Assembly on the recent publication of the Library of Wales series, which takes us back to our heritage and reminds us of the many excellent works that outline our Welshness.

[291] **Peter Black:** I will give the last point to the Minister, who is going to keep it very short.

[292] **Jane Davidson:** I am grateful to people for their comments on the Curriculum Cymreig. Of course, it is also in the qualified teacher status standards, and that is the important point in terms of the ITT training.

[293] **Peter Black:** I thank you all for coming along. It has been a useful and informative session, and I think that it has been helpful in our consideration of the Furlong report.

12.27 p.m.

Blaenraglen Waith Strategol Strategic Forward Work Programme

[294] **Peter Black:** This is the last item for the committee to consider. May I ask if

Members are content with that programme? I see that they are. I also ask you to note the procedural minutes of the previous meeting, the committee's annual report and the minutes of South West Wales Regional Committee on the Welsh bacculaureate.

[295] **Jeff Cuthbert:** That committee meeting was very good.

[296] **Peter Black:** I was there for the whole meeting, Jeff, so I concur. Thank you, everyone, for coming along.

*Daeth y cyfarfod i ben am 12.27 p.m.
The meeting ended at 12.27 p.m.*