



**Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru
The National Assembly for Wales**

**Y Pwyllgor Menter a Dysgu
The Enterprise and Learning Committee**

**Dydd Mawrth, 19 Tachwedd 2008
Wednesday, 19 November 2008**

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Cofnodir y trafodion hyn yn yr iaith y llefarwyd hwy ynndi 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'r pwyllgor yn bresennol
Committee members in attendance

Christine Chapman	Llafur Labour
Andrew R.T. Davies	Ceidwadwyr Cymreig Welsh Conservatives
Gareth Jones	Plaid Cymru (Cadeirydd y Pwyllgor) The Party of Wales (Committee Chair)
David Melding	Ceidwadwyr Cymreig Welsh Conservatives
Sandy Mewies	Llafur Labour
Kirsty Williams	Democratiaid Rhyddfrydol Cymru Welsh Liberal Democrats

Eraill yn bresennol
Others in attendance

Karl Napieralla	Cyfarwyddwr Corfforaethol Addysg, Hamdden a Dysgu Gydol Oes, Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Castell Nedd Port Talbot Corporate Director of Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning, Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council
Andrew Thomas	Pennaeth Gwasanaethau Cefnogi a Chomisiynu, Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Castell Nedd Port Talbot Head of Support Services and Commissioning Development, Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council

Swyddogion Gwasanaeth Seneddol y Cynulliad yn bresennol
Assembly Parliamentary Service officials in attendance

Dan Collier	Clerc Clerk
Siân Hughes	Gwasanaeth Ymchwil yr Aelodau Members' Research Service
Dr Kathryn Jenkins	Dirprwy Glerc Deputy Clerk

Dechreuodd y cyfarfod am 9.32 a.m.
The meeting began at 9.32 a.m.

Cyflwyniad ac Ymddiheuriadau
Introduction and Apologies

[1] **Gareth Jones:** Bore da a chroeso i'r cyfarfod hwn o'r Pwyllgor Menter a Dysgu. Estynnaf groeso arbennig y bore yma i Jackie Nickson, aelod o'r panel adolygu annibynnol sy'n adolygu'r gyfundrefn gymorth i Aelodau. Mae hi yma heddiw i arsylwi ar ein trafodion ac i ddysgu am waith yr Aelodau mewn pwyllgorau. Croeso cynnes iawn iddi.

Gareth Jones: Good morning and welcome to this meeting of the Enterprise and Learning Committee. I extend a particularly warm welcome to Jackie Nickson this morning, who is a member of the independent review panel that is reviewing the support provided to Members. She is here today to observe proceedings and to learn about Members' work in committees. A very warm welcome to her.

[2] Atgoffaf bawb i ddiffodd eu ffonau symudol ac unrhyw ddyfais electronig arall. Nid oes angen i chi gyffwrdd â'r meicroffonau. Nid ydym yn disgwyl ymarfer tân, felly os clywn unrhyw larwm, rhaid inni adael yr ystafell a'r adeilad dan gyfarwyddyd y tywysyddion. Mae'r cyfarfod yn ddwyieithog, ac mae clustffonau ar gael i glywed y gwasanaeth cyfieithu ar y pryd o'r Gymraeg i'r Saesneg ar sianel 1 ac i chwyddleisio'r sain ar sianel 0. Bydd cofnod o'r cyfan a ddywedir yn gyhoeddus.

I remind everyone to switch off mobile phones and any other electronic devices. There is no need to touch the microphones. We are not expecting a fire drill, so, if there is any alarm, we will have to leave the room and the building, following the ushers' instructions. This meeting will be conducted bilingually, and headsets are available for you to hear the interpretation from Welsh into English on channel 1 and to amplify the sound on channel 0. There will be a record of all that is said publicly.

[3] Cafwyd ymddiheuriadau y bore yma gan Janet Ryder a Jeff Cuthbert, sy'n mynychu gweithgareddau Cymdeithas Seneddol y Gymanwlad, a chan Huw Lewis. Nid oes dirprwyon.

We have received apologies this morning from Janet Ryder and Jeff Cuthbert, who are involved in Commonwealth Parliamentary Association activities, and Huw Lewis. There are no substitutes.

9.34 a.m.

Cytundeb Llwyth Gwaith Athrawon The Teachers' Workload Agreement

[4] **Gareth Jones:** Egluraf y cefndir i'r eitem hon yn gryno. Mae'r pwyllgor yn cynnal ymchwiliad craffu i weithredu cytundeb llwyth gwaith athrawon. Cynhaliwyd sesiwn graffu ar 1 Hydref gydag undebau'r athrawon. Cynhelir sesiwn bellach gyda Llywodraethwyr Cymru ac undebau nad ydynt yn cynrychioli athrawon ond yn hytrach staff a effeithir gan y cytundeb, yn gynnar yn y flwyddyn newydd.

Gareth Jones: I will briefly explain the background to this item. The committee is conducting a scrutiny inquiry into the implementation of the teacher workload agreement. We held a scrutiny session on 1 October with the teaching unions. A further session will be held with Governors Wales and unions that do not represent teachers but rather staff who are affected by the workload agreement, early in the new year.

[5] Heddiw, ceir cyfle i holi cynrychiolwyr Cymdeithas Llywodraeth Leol Cymru a Chymdeithas Cyfarwyddwyr Addysg Cymru. Mae'r prif arolygydd addysg a hyfforddiant wedi cyflwyno tystiolaeth ysgrifenedig. Felly, ar ran y pwyllgor, estynnaf groeso cynnes i'r ddau ohonoch y bore yma. Croesawn Karl Napieralla, cyfarwyddwr corfforaethol addysg, hamdden a dysgu gydol oes yng Nghyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Castell-nedd Port Talbot, a hefyd Andrew Thomas, pennaeth gwasanaethau cefnogi a chomisiynu Cymdeithas Llywodraeth Leol Cymru.

Today, we have an opportunity to question representatives from the Welsh Local Government Association and the Association of Directors of Education in Wales. The chief inspector of education and training has submitted written evidence. Therefore, on behalf of the committee, I extend a warm welcome to you both this morning. We welcome Karl Napieralla, corporate director of education, leisure and lifelong learning at Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council, and Andrew Thomas, head of support services and commissioning development for the Welsh Local Government Association.

[6] Gofynnaf i'r ddau ohonoch wneud cyflwyniad byr, o ryw bump i 10 munud, ac wedyn cawn y cyfle i'ch holi. Diolch hefyd am eich papur a'ch tystiolaeth ysgrifenedig.

I ask both of you to make a brief presentation, of five to 10 minutes, and we will then have an opportunity to question you. Thank you for your paper and your

written evidence.

[7] **Mr Napieralla:** Diolch. Thank you for inviting us. We want to take the opportunity this morning to reflect on the teachers' workload agreement, and to give you some practical examples, through Andrew's work, of how it is working in one authority.

[8] When the initiative was first introduced of releasing teachers from some quite onerous burdens, it was welcomed by everyone in the learning profession, not just in schools. One thing that the committee will, hopefully, consider is the impact that this has had on the quality of teaching and learning for young people in our schools. Needless to say, good and committed teachers are still working in their own time, despite an improvement in the conditions of service that this workload agreement introduced. It was a long time coming, but it was welcomed by everyone.

[9] Where it is used effectively, there is evidence that teachers are planning more effectively together. They are looking in more depth at how they assess young people. They have the time to prepare more effectively for the quality learning experiences that they are providing in the classroom. There has also been a lot of emphasis on reducing the bureaucratic burdens on teachers. So, the evidence on that is perhaps more circumstantial. In the primary sector, particularly, it is no use trying to take tasks away from teachers if they feel that those tasks are an integral part of their work—display work, and so on—because, by their very professionalism, they want to be involved in those tasks to give them their flavour.

[10] However, notwithstanding that, a great deal of work has been done to reduce bureaucratic burdens, and particularly the removal of the requirement for teachers to invigilate exams. At present, they have to cover for absent colleagues for only 30 hours a week, and everyone welcomes the fact that we are moving towards zero cover for colleagues' sickness absence, and so on. However, there is a lot of goodwill, particularly in smaller schools where people cannot always facilitate cover at a moment's notice, and there is a team ethos to be found. People will muck in.

[11] The important thing is that, if individuals and teachers' union representatives bring evidence to the authorities of their schools and senior management not taking this as seriously as they ought to, namely providing what is now a conditions of service opportunity, we are duty bound to take that message back to our directors. The Welsh Local Government Association and the Association of Directors of Education in Wales meet regularly with teachers' associations, and if they throw evidence to us that this is not happening on the ground, we take the message back to directors. If we are as proactive as we ought to be, and as long as the evidence is real and not anecdotal, we build inquiries into our visits to monitor school performance, which most authorities carry out regularly when they look at evaluating the quality of teaching and learning and outcomes for young people in schools. By and large, on our patch, we have found quite a smooth transition to the new working arrangements and the emphasis is on embedding the agreement.

9.40 a.m.

[12] We have to be careful in looking at the teachers' workload agreement that we do not neglect the needs of senior management in our schools, particularly headteachers. We are concerned about headteachers' workload. We have an annual general meeting of the governors' association in Neath Port Talbot tonight, at which I will raise the work-life balance of headteachers. Evidence shows that they are leaving the profession early because of that issue. So, in the same way as we have looked at teachers' workload, we need to look at the workload of other members of staff, particularly those working in small schools.

[13] It is a double-edged sword, in a way, because, if you work in a small school and you

are ambitious and career minded, you are likely to get the opportunity to work on a breadth of management issues, which you would not get in a larger school, where you might be working in more of a silo. So, we are seeing an increase in the pressure there, but largely the teachers' workload agreement is going well. However, we cannot be complacent, and our role in the WLGA and in ADEW is to meet regularly with teachers' and headteachers' associations—and indeed non-teaching unions on the ground—to ensure that the terms and conditions brought in by the workload agreement are protected. I will ask Andrew to give you a flavour of some of the discussions that we have had on the ground, because, in his role, he commissions this support from the sector. So, could you make some comments, Andrew?

[14] **Mr Thomas:** I will focus on some of the issues around the implementation of the agreement. For teachers, the workload agreement has had a beneficial effect. I chair, in my role, a number of groups with the teaching and support-staff unions. I also chair the local social partnership board, which is the workforce agreement monitoring group in Neath Port Talbot. Rarely are any issues raised in any of those fora on the implementation of the workload for teachers.

[15] To give you some indicators of success, we have a long-term sickness absence scheme in Neath Port Talbot council, and last year, for the first time in a long time, that scheme was undersubscribed in drawing down the funding. So, long-term sickness absence is down and we see that as an indicator of success with the workload.

[16] Headteachers are a different kettle of fish, as there are greater issues around the workload of headteachers and senior staff. Those issues manifest themselves in early retirement. Many retired early in Neath Port Talbot last year, at the age of 55, taking a 25 per cent actuarial hit on their pensions. Some even retired before the age of 55 with no access to their pensions. So that is of concern to us, and is an indicator of some of the extra pressures put on them by the workload agreement.

[17] Support mechanisms are in place for headteachers, including bursar schemes, which have proven to be very successful. Around half of our schools now subscribe to bursar schemes, which offer support for people to come in to help headteachers to undertake their management duties, to free up time to manage their schools and the teaching and learning aspects in the school. That is new, and we see it as being a positive step, but we have concerns. Karl mentioned that, this evening, we will be challenging governors and chairs of governing boards to consider seriously the work-life balance of headteachers. In fact, the Neath Port Talbot headteacher conference last year focused entirely on work-life balance for headteachers and senior teachers. I think that the agreement's impact has been differential—it has certainly had a positive impact on teaching staff. Estyn has commented on some of the good practice that has been implemented in schools, but I think that we have a bit of a way to go for headteachers.

[18] **Mr Napieralla:** Chair, I would like to make a couple of other comments to follow on from that. I was asked yesterday what my opinion was of the Estyn comment that there is evidence that, in two thirds of schools, you can see a positive impact on learning outcomes as a result of the teachers' workload agreement. The emphasis was on the fact that it was in only two thirds of schools, but I do not think that that is a bad baseline to have achieved within five years, to be honest, in that this was a staged implementation of new conditions of service. It is sometimes difficult to embrace change, as you know, and change has been constant since I have been in the game, which is too long to mention.

[19] The important thing is that this was a major change in teachers' working conditions. Although it was welcomed, there were huge management implications in delivering it. Therefore, I am quite pleased that Estyn has been able to find evidence that two thirds of our schools are showing signs of improvement in pupil achievement and particularly in

behaviour. In the good schools, teachers prepared, assessed and monitored together, but they very often did that in their own time or had extremely well structured in-service training sessions in which to do it. I was part of a department that brought some of those things in. The workload agreement systemised that and that was why it was so welcome.

[20] The other point that I would like to make is that we must not be complacent on the funding issues relating to this. The funding has been rolled in to the schools' base budget through the revenue support grant. At the moment, it is recognised in authorities as a separate line in the budget, but there is pressure coming from schools that, following a formula review, it should be put in the general teachers' line. So, I do not think that we can be complacent about funding because it is very important that we are transparent and that it is used properly.

[21] **Gareth Jones:** Thank you both for referring to key aspects of this agreement on the basis of your own experiences and, I take it, the wider picture gleaned from the Association of Directors of Education in Wales and the Welsh Local Government Association. Quite a few Members want to ask questions. I will start with Andrew R.T. Davies and then I will bring in Sandy.

[22] **Andrew R.T. Davies:** Thank you, Chair, and thank you, gentlemen, for coming in this morning. In the evidence-gathering session that the committee undertook on 1 October, one of the elements of support that was deemed to be failing was the workload agreement management groups, which I think are now called social partnerships. There was strong evidence from the teachers' unions and the headteachers' representatives that, in many local authorities, these had been significantly downgraded from their original roles and the facilitators, who had been working to roll out the workload agreement had, in many instances, been degraded in the councils' pecking order. Do you have anything to say on that? Those groups are fundamental to delivering the project, monitoring it and liaising with the Assembly Government to identify either a lack resources or teething problems.

[23] To be fair to the Minister, she said that, with her officials, she was now looking seriously at reviving the role of the social partnerships. That work was just starting to progress, as I understand it from the evidence that we took. I would be interested in your view on the social partnership in your area, but also on what is going on in Wales in a wider sense.

[24] **Mr Napieralla:** I am sure that Andrew will have something to say on that because he works in the partnership that you mentioned.

9.50 a.m.

[25] This is a tricky one because it was always going to be part of the integrated approach that authorities take when dealing with schools in particular and teachers' unions. As these changes are embedded, it was always envisaged, we believe, that there would not be so much of a need for designated people to deliver it. In the early years, certainly, there was a role for a change co-ordinator in the authority but, as the changes became embedded, we never envisaged that being a full-time, high-level post. Evidence of downgrading has not been coming through to us as, in our case, it is still part of the role of a senior member of staff—

[26] **Andrew R.T. Davies:** I think that the point made to us was about role assimilation, in that the role would often have been incorporated into a human resources role and the understanding of the workload agreement may have been diluted so that the urgency of seeing through the initiative has been lost—it is yet to be delivered fully, with the final part coming in September next year. That message came across loud and clear. You are saying that, from your perspective, it was never the intention for this to continue to be a role in its own right, whereas from the perspective of the teachers' unions it clearly was and they see it as a crucial plank of delivery.

[27] **Mr Napieralla:** That is true, but you know the situation with authorities over the past few years, and it is about prioritising the work. The situation is that we have been losing staff. The important thing is that the issues have been overseen and looked after properly, and the evidence on the ground is that they have been. In my case, the member of staff who was recruited to deal with this was not newly recruited. I guess that it is the same for most authorities—existing members of staff with the necessary experience to step up and out of the jobs that they were doing are recruited to see this through. I cannot therefore say that it was ever envisaged that this would be a full-time post for ever. By and large, authorities have a good track record on embedding this.

[28] The authorities that are being particularly successful have arrangements to monitor this regularly in their meetings with representatives of teachers' unions. Even we have been under pressure to maintain senior members of staff in a unique role in this regard, but needs must and we have not been able to do that when setting priorities. That does not mean to say that we are not on top of the agenda. Perhaps you would like to add to that, Andrew.

[29] **Mr Thomas:** It is interesting to hear you say that it is the teachers' unions that have raised that issue. As I mentioned earlier, I chair the local social partnership board—the workforce agreement monitoring group. All the support-staff unions and teachers' unions are represented at the table, but there is only one union in Neath Port Talbot that raises the issue of the change manager role, which I think is what you are getting to—

[30] **Andrew R.T. Davies:** And the partnership per se, as a body.

[31] **Mr Thomas:** The emphasis to secure WAMGs was renewed nationally recently, and I am pretty sure that that has been successful. However, on the role of the change manager, only one union raises the issue as a serious concern. We have addressed the matter in Neath Port Talbot. The other unions are comfortable that the agreement that we have is a good one and that, in general terms, it is being implemented in the spirit of the agreement. I do not know whether you picked up in earlier meetings—

[32] **Andrew R.T. Davies:** Well, if you check the Record of the meeting of 1 October, the Minister acknowledges the fact that the social partnerships have declined. The official who has just come into the job, a Mr P. Jones, also conceded that the role has been diminished. I am just following up the point that has been brought to us as a scrutiny committee. You guys seem to be saying that that is not the case and that it was most probably envisaged by local authorities that these roles would diminish over time anyway. So, it was not just one union; it was several. It is in the Record, so you can have a look at it.

[33] **Mr Napieralla:** I think that you are talking about the role of an individual to bring this together. We meet regularly with our trade union colleagues, particularly with the Association of Directors of Education in Wales, and the WLGA is always present. Now that you have raised the issue, we will raise it in our next meeting with them, because our evidence, as Andrew said, is that the WAMGs are still functioning. They may have been rolled into the regular meetings that we have with the unions in any case, because we meet them every half term and these issues are considered. This has happened because of how far we have come on the journey.

[34] The last part of the journey is the zero-cover scenario, which is where the teachers' unions would want the local authorities to really embrace that and monitor it. Unless the funding is right, given all the priorities that schools have in terms of teaching and learning, it will probably be the most difficult issue for them to address, particularly on a daily basis in terms of the management of the school. Although we can stand the odd incident, where the requirement is consistently ignored, we must ensure that our teachers are protected. We will

raise it as an issue.

[35] **Andrew R.T. Davies:** On the final implementation of the teachers' workload agreement, by September 2009, teachers are supposed to need to provide cover only rarely. Another piece of evidence that we have heard is that the number of staff covering for absent colleagues declined in the first couple of years of the workload agreement, but that the trend is now going in the opposite direction. However, we have 12 months to meet the final requirement that teachers will have to provide cover for absent colleagues only rarely. Is that final section of the agreement attainable, because we have heard that there is no additional resource in the system to meet the obligation? Furthermore, the indices are showing that we are moving away from achieving that.

[36] **Mr Napieralla:** We have not had any indication from our trade union representatives locally that that is the case or that they are not confident that headteachers and senior management in schools are beavering away to ensure that that is written into the timetables of individual teachers. All I can say is that we will do our best to ensure that we have mechanisms in place for regular reviews of the situation, because if we do not meet that requirement we will find an escalation in disputes locally and regionally, with trade unions and teachers' unions representing individual cases. We have had the odd anecdote thrown at us, and we have asked for the evidence to be presented to us. That is one of the reasons why I am raising the issue tonight with the chairs of boards of governors in the annual general meeting, because it is their role to monitor this as much as it ours, in fact, even more so, particularly if you transfer it into work-life balance issues of senior management.

[37] So, I am confident that there are mechanisms in place to monitor this issue, and I have no evidence—and my colleagues have certainly not made the point strongly—that it will not happen within the timescale. However, we must ensure that the funding is utilised properly. The funding is in the base budget for what was always going to be a four or five-year implementation programme, and the funding was upfront to cover that. However, there are many priorities and issues that schools will have to deal with. There is not a consistent approach to funding schools across Wales, as you know, and, as authorities find themselves in certain positions, they adjust their school funding accordingly, particularly, I would suggest, given falling school rolls. It is something that must be more than a balancing act for headteachers and governors. There is no question about it: they must deliver this, so, our role will be to monitor it. I am not complacent and I am with you in that we must keep an eye on it, but we have not received evidence from across Wales that it will not happen and be fully implemented.

[38] **Gareth Jones:** Sandy is waiting to come in, but I think that Kirsty has a specific point about delivering the programme first.

10.00 a.m.

[39] **Kirsty Williams:** You will be aware that the Department for Children, Schools and Families proposes to introduce legislation with regards to compliance that would allow local authorities to issue notices to schools that are not complying with the statutory provisions. We have had different views from the unions as to whether they believe that we should have similar legislation in Wales. What is your view on compliance legislation?

[40] **Mr Napieralla:** I have mixed views on compliance legislation. We have a marvellous opportunity, working with the Assembly in Wales, to get the education system that we want and one that is fit for purpose for the Welsh context. We have been particularly successful—some people may think that it is more mixed—over the years in terms of the WLGA and ADEW in working with Ministers, Jane Davidson and now Jane Hutt, to deliver some innovative programmes of learning. Sometimes, I do not know why we need to move to a

legislative arrangement to back up what we want to do. This is my personal view, not the view of the association, but I do not think that there is a need for that, unless we have overwhelming evidence from our teachers unions that there is non-compliance across the country.

[41] **Kirsty Williams:** Does the association have a stated view?

[42] **Mr Napieralla:** It does not have a stated view, but I would guess, knowing our directors as I do, that the executive would probably accept my view.

[43] **Sandy Mewies:** Thank you for your report. I understand that Estyn is not coming here to speak to its report. Is that correct?

[44] **Gareth Jones:** That is correct.

[45] **Sandy Mewies:** That makes it difficult, because there is a lot of meat in the Estyn report, and I am not sure whether it is fair to ask anyone else questions on that. First of all, it seems to me, from looking at the papers, that the general feeling is that the teacher workload agreement is good, in the main, and that PPA is working, in the main, with some exceptions. I have not, however, found examples showing why it is working. There are comments saying, 'We think this is a good thing', but none saying why it is working. You alluded, Karl, in what you said, to how good practice has always gone on in some schools. It tends to be teachers who are in charge of the various key stages who are working together to ensure that progress is made, which is the sort of thing that they used to have to plan for in their spare time rather than having the time to do it. When it works, why is it working and how is that good practice shared? When it does not work, why is that? That is my first point.

[46] You made a good point about headteachers. Once the role of the headteacher changed to that of a school manager, which has happened over the last 10 years or so, it put a heavy burden on headteachers. In my experience, whether they were primary headteachers or headteachers in large or small schools, their role as leader affected every school. You talked about bursars taking some of that role away from them, which is fine in a secondary school, but a primary school bursar is probably the school secretary—there is not so much scope there to do that.

[47] On the other hand, we have received some evidence from various people pointing out that, in England, funding goes directly to schools in greater percentages than it does in Wales, but the implication of that, to me anyway, is that, if you give extra funding directly to schools, that will increase the management burden. That has to be the case. There is a question of where the funding goes, but we know that it is going to central services, managed by the LEA, generally speaking. How do you square that circle? Do you agree with the position that extra resources should go directly to schools? Would all schools be able to cope with that, and would that help with the problems that our headteachers undoubtedly face? I am sure of that, from what I have seen in schools.

[48] Another point on funding—Karl alluded to this—is that times are not easy for local authorities. There is previous evidence that local authorities have not spent to their indicator based assessment. There are now mechanisms in place to ensure that budget fora can look at that and come up with the reasons for it. Do you have evidence that, in future years, the emphasis will be on education? Will they spend to the IBA, and will the money put there for children be spent on children at the time allocated? That again will alleviate what will happen to teachers and headteachers. I have quite a few points on this; some of which arise from Estyn's paper. That is the difficulty that I have with this.

[49] The purpose of the teachers' workload agreement and PPA, principally, is to allow a

work-life balance for teachers. However, there is another purpose, which is to improve achievement and the quality of learning in schools. Although I see that Estyn is saying ‘yes’ to that—it is good that two thirds of schools are doing that—the indication that I read is that that is happening when there is specialist input in PPA time, which does not always happen. Therefore, what is happening? Do you have any evidence of any other way that PPA is having an impact on achievement and quality of learning?

[50] I think that that is about all that I have to ask. I would like to just check, because, unfortunately, I have been skipping from one paper to another.

[51] **Gareth Jones:** I have noted around four questions so far. Christine wants to add something.

[52] **Christine Chapman:** I would like to add on to Sandy’s last point, because that was the main point that I wanted to make. The quality of learning for children is also my concern. In the early days of this, I think that primary schools seemed to be concerned that they were not having teacher-for-teacher provision. It was mixed. I am still picking up that not all schools are consistent in their approach, which goes back to the discussion that we had on the leadership issue. I would welcome your views on that. Although Estyn said that things have improved, which is welcome, the picture is still slightly unclear as to why that is the case. To add to Sandy’s point, I would welcome your views on how it is working and how consistent this approach is. I know of schools that are doing it in a completely different way to neighbouring schools. It is great if schools are doing it well, but we need to be really concerned about those schools that may be struggling. Obviously, the concern is that the learning experience of a pupil should be at the forefront of this.

[53] **Mr Napieralla:** I think that there were four or five questions there, Chair. I think that they are inter-related, so with Andrew’s help, perhaps, we will try to answer all of them.

[54] First, there is evidence that the impact is quite marked. If your spouse, partner, son or daughter is a teacher—I have one at home—you will find that they still work all the hours given by God, as they want to do their best for their young people. So, you will find them taking work home, and you sometimes have to question why that is the case. Is it because PPA and so on is not effective as it should be? There is new evidence on the ground that, where it is effectively managed, and the time is extremely well spent—do not forget that it is for individual teachers to decide how to spend that time, as well as being directed; sometimes teachers have to be helped to utilise the time effectively—it is having a marked effect on improving teaching and learning, particularly in schools that are bucking the trend of their intake or the area of deprivation that they work in, in terms of examination outcomes and so on. So, there is evidence to be found.

10.10 a.m.

[55] In terms of linking that to the funding situation and the scenario in England, I have been in this profession a long time, and I have taught in England—actually, a few former colleagues, who are still headteachers in England, are coming to spend the weekend with me, probably to watch us being hammered by the New Zealanders. The important thing to note about England is that schools there cannot call themselves community-focused schools; they have to call themselves extended schools. Quite a few of my former secondary colleagues in England are in a situation where they have an intake of pupils from 30 or more primary schools, and have pupils travelling across the county. That is relevant, because, in trying different approaches in Wales—we have mentioned, for example, the bursar scheme—we are able, as local authorities, to encourage schools to work together in partnership within those communities. We do not accept that you cannot have effective support for schools at the primary level, and less support than you can have at the secondary level, because our

experience is that we are getting schools to work together in clusters to share—

[56] **Sandy Mewies:** I wondered about clustering, and whether it could be used as a regional approach.

[57] **Mr Napieralla:** Yes. ADEW is encouraging four effective regions, and, hopefully, the Welsh Assembly Government will work with us to get some resources for that. There is an opportunity to cluster and to share best practice, but, more importantly, to try different approaches. What works in some schools will not work in others. It is very much down to teachers, in the main, being supported to accept the change, and also for them to realise that, when they leave their class—to do the things that they are able to do under the teachers' workload agreement—they do not forget about their class; the class is taken through their activities very much on their direction and understanding. However, we are finding that innovative ways are emerging to cover a number of whole-school agenda issues, such as health and wellbeing and physical education and sport, through the management of the PPA time, by bringing other professionals into the school situation. We are seeing a new era in staff and workforce development emerging, I think, as result of many issues, not least the foundation phase, the new emphasis on health and wellbeing and sport, and, in particular, the opportunity for paraprofessionals to work in schools, undertaking some of these duties, but very much under the direction of the teacher.

[58] **Christine Chapman:** On that point, I hope that there are assurances that things have moved on. One concern early on was that schools would have to pay to get organisations such as sports organisations into the school. That was not always easy, and, sometimes, they cancelled at the last-minute, so the teacher would have to continue with the teaching. Are those experiences still happening?

[59] **Mr Napieralla:** I cannot say that they are not happening any more, because we have had the odd situation like that ourselves. There is now a systemic change, and this links with the point about identifying and gauging success. The success is certainly in leadership and organisational development, at primary and secondary level, and you will see that schools have restructured as a result in order to deliver the workload agreement. It is safe to say, certainly in our experience, that some of these changes are now embedded into working practices, and that there is a systematic approach in the planning. This will become increasingly important in the new context, because, do not forget that, from this autumn, schools will have to embrace the children and young people's plan. They are no longer working under our single education plan, which is reflected in the school development plans. From this autumn, they are working under the single plan. There will be challenges, but also opportunities for them to utilise some of the other organisations, which can come in and back them up in a more systematic way than is perhaps the case in some schools.

[60] However, the important thing for local authorities is to ensure that we are positioned at the heart of this agenda, so that we can ensure that good practice is shared, inconsistent practice is eradicated, and we act on the evidence brought to us by teachers or associations, when they find instances of this agenda not working. You have some good examples of discussions where we have identified best practice and spread that information through our fora.

[61] **Mr Thomas:** Certainly. In terms of the way that PPAs deliver, there is a suite of solutions out there, and it is right and proper that the schools should decide what is best for them in delivering PPA. You referred to sports coaches, and in a former life I tried to negotiate with headteachers to send a team of my people out to schools to deliver PPA. Some accepted it, and some thought the idea abhorrent, because those people were not qualified teachers. It is now being implemented, and there are a range of measures out there: other support services, and some of the stuff that I am now responsible for, such as music

development, which teachers are using more and more. It depends on the wishes and the preferences of the headteacher, and the needs within the school. It is right and proper that it is delivered in different ways. Yes, there is some inconsistency, but the truth is that PPA is delivered, and to go back to the point that you made earlier, it works best where it is delivered by specialists.

[62] **Mr Napieralla:** We need some quite detailed research, and this is something that we can talk about with the Welsh Assembly Government regarding the school effectiveness framework. There could perhaps be more concentrated research on the way these arrangements impact upon improving teaching and learning. If Estyn finds evidence that this is making an impact, we can be confident that there is more of an impact than would be picked up in a single inspection. Certainly, we want to improve from two thirds to 100 per cent—although we will never reach 100 per cent, because all schools are different. However, we want to get as close as possible to 100 per cent of inspections finding that there is an impact on pupil outcomes. Perhaps we need to commission research to look specifically at this, and then perhaps we will be able to spread best practice more effectively.

[63] **Mr Thomas:** To pick up on Karl's point, I am aware of some ongoing research about how the agreement has been implemented, its impact on staff morale, and the differences between support and teaching staff.

[64] **Sandy Mewies:** Could you send us a link to that?

[65] **Mr Thomas:** Certainly.

[66] **Gareth Jones:** We could refer to that as a recommendation—commissioning that research. I take it that both Sandy and Christine's points have been answered. If there is a further piece of research, then obviously that will strengthen the evidence base, and possibly assuage some of our concerns about the inconsistencies that Karl referred to.

[67] I now turn to David Melding.

[68] **David Melding:** I would like to talk about the situation facing headteachers. Until recently I was chair of governors at a special school in the primary sector, and I have observed the work of headteachers at that school over the years. I want to pin down what the role of the governing body should be. Governor visits, and reports to the governing body by the senior management team, provide an obvious way of monitoring the workload agreement, and ensuring that it is being delivered. In my experience, we have had regular reports on how the policy is delivered and structured.

10.20 a.m.

[69] A good governing body will obviously pick up some of that—how a headteacher is doing in a general pastoral sense. The quality of the work and the reporting to the governing body demonstrate some of that too, but it is not quite analogous to a good headteacher or other senior managers ensuring, in a day-to-day or more direct sense, that the teachers are not getting all of the burden and that they are coping with the inevitable stresses. Headteachers and managers are there on the ground and they deliver management, do they not? The whole point is that they are there to encourage and support. However, a governing body cannot do that for a headteacher. The chair of the board of governors can act as a sort of ear of last resort so that the headteacher can talk to someone in confidence, but it is still not the same professional relationship that you get between qualified headteachers, who will obviously be former classroom teachers, and their staff.

[70] So, what are the limits to what a governing body can do in terms of ensuring that

headteachers are sustained in their role? There is a huge danger, as you indicated, with regard to early retirement and ill health if headteachers are not supported properly in what is a very formidable, albeit rewarding, job. I am not sure whether people realise how many skills you need to run a school; it is a highly professional job. One idea that I have is to link headteachers up more in a sort of monitoring system that would create more direct links between schools of a similar type so that headteachers could discuss their workloads and their schools' progress, because another professional may be able to pick up danger signs in a way that a governing body probably would not.

[71] **Mr Napieralla:** I have one or two things to say to that that, on the surface, may appear to be slightly controversial. I know that I am past my sell-by date as a headteacher now, but I have always regarded myself as a teacher—that is one of the reasons why I got into the teaching profession. Headship is now vastly different from what it was when I was head of a comprehensive school. With regard to what we can do to ensure that headteachers are being supported, part of it is of their own making, part of it is in the system, and part of it is ensuring that governors are more than aware of, and equipped to provide, the necessary support as well as the monitoring necessary to pick up early on any signs of issues that could lead to things getting out of hand and, indeed, as Andrew said, to a headteacher leaving a school or taking early retirement because of stress.

[72] First, we have discussions with the Welsh Assembly Government, and we certainly do not think that the National Professional Qualification for Headship is fit for purpose as it stands, particularly for equipping headteachers to deal with several of the change-management issues that are arising. There needs to be much more focus on leadership at all levels. You can have an extremely strong leader as the head of a school and yet the school can be dysfunctional because there is no leadership at the classroom level. One of the suggestions that we have for governors is that, building on the fact that they are allowing their headteachers to be involved in mentoring schemes, they need to be more systematic in terms of monitoring school performance. One example from our authority is that we have a peer group of headteachers involved with the local authority in monitoring schools' performance. There is an opportunity to share practice but also for headteachers to pick up on some of the issues that, quite frankly, only they can understand in dealing with a colleague. That is something that could come out of partnership agreements and the work that we are doing nationally on the school effectiveness framework.

[73] **Gareth Jones:** How does that relate, if at all, to the system of teacher appraisal that used to be implemented? Has that been abandoned, because that would have addressed the very approach that you are trying to reintroduce?

[74] **Mr Napieralla:** No, it has not been abandoned in most schools, particularly in the schools that are doing particularly well; they have embraced that in the Investors in People programme, and so on, and in the way in which staff development arises from individual interviews. However, in terms of headteachers, I think that we need to go further than that—who appraises the headteacher? There has to be that relationship of trust. Therefore, bringing in peer headteachers to review is much more productive than having an us-and-them situation, where the authorities come in, and they say to them, 'I have just had my inspection, why do I need to be monitored by you guys?'. We feel that we ought to be the advocates of pupil outcomes and high-quality teaching and learning. Once every five years is not good enough; it should be an annual dialogue between an authority and the school.

[75] The other point, in terms of governors, is to ensure that they are supported in making the right appointments, and in making good appointments. Quite a lot of work has been done by our governors support officers group in ADEW, as well as through working in conjunction with Governors Wales, to ensure that governors are equipped to make good appointments. The role of the governors is not to get too close, but to have this climate of trust within which

headteachers can operate, and within which they feel that they can bring problems such as this to the governors. Governors know the school well, so they have that understanding. There is not one answer, but, in Wales, we have a much better opportunity for partnering, clustering, and sharing onerous responsibilities, than perhaps some of our neighbours do. The bursar scheme that you have introduced is one example, and there is interest in that across the region, is there not?

[76] **Mr Thomas:** I do not know how serious you were, but you said that the chair of the governors is the ‘ear of last resort’. I am not sure that I agree with that; the chair is possibly the ear of first resort. While a professional relationship does not exist, per se, between the chair of governors and the headteacher as it does between the headteacher and teachers, it is still an extremely important role. I would like to introduce the role of human resources in local government to this scenario. It depends upon what role it plays, and there is a huge difference across Wales in terms of how HR is structured and the role that it plays in supporting headteachers. Karl mentioned supporting governors so that they make good appointments—that is critical. However, the role of HR in training governors, to enable them to support the headteachers, is also critical.

[77] Therefore, one body of people that was perhaps missing from Karl’s earlier contribution is HR, which can play a vital role. There was an article in the *Times Education Supplement* recently that generally decried HR services across Wales in terms of their support for schools. However, I am delighted to say that Neath Port Talbot council was mentioned in that article as bucking the trend. I believe that we buck the trend because we have taken a positive step to support schools and understand and meet their needs.

[78] **David Melding:** To follow up on that, in terms of appointments, are we getting a healthy number of candidates onto shortlists, or is that a problem? If we are not, does that tell us—especially if we are looking at deputy posts—that teaching staff consider headteachers to be somewhat isolated and unsupported, otherwise more of them would perhaps aspire to those positions, would they not?

[79] **Mr Thomas:** I believe that the most coveted role in the school is that of the deputy head. Often, the differential between the pay of a deputy head and a headteacher—in a primary school in particular—is not that great, yet the difference in the level of responsibility is enormous. That is not so true of the secondary sector. I was with secondary headteachers yesterday, who said that the differential in pay between a secondary headteacher and a deputy headteacher is too big. We have recruitment issues in secondary schools, and the trend shows that we are moving to a position of not having suitable shortlists.

10.30 a.m.

[80] **Gareth Jones:** I will conclude this session now, and so I thank you both for your contributions. However, before you go, I wanted to follow up Andrew’s reference to embedding and bring to your attention the progress and the fact that there is still some way to go on the level of support that is given. However, in spite of all our problems with local government settlements and so on, it is a worthwhile, indeed essential, project. I reaffirm what Andrew said in that I hope that local authorities will keep an eye on this and give it the fullest possible support. The change managers to whom you referred still have an important role to play for the obvious reasons that we discussed earlier.

[81] Two points specifically referred to by the WLGA are of concern, because we are aware of the problems, even though there is good practice and there are inductions and so on. The WLGA says that there are potential difficulties ahead, which will have to be addressed. There will be further challenges for schools as the work on single status and equal pay is taken forward. I know that that is a general theme, but I think that it will have an impact on

the non-teaching staff.

[82] In addition, the proposals contained in transforming education and training in Wales will provide additional challenges for data collaboration and so on. The work is unfinished and it would possibly be harmful for us not to remain focused on this. There is a challenge here and I make an appeal from the chair for you to consider the problems ahead.

[83] **Mr Napieralla:** Certainly, Chair. I am sure that the teaching unions would not allow us to move the issue lower down the agenda. I make one plea in return to the Welsh Assembly Government. We have shown the strength that comes from local authorities working together, and we have a structure in local education authorities, with local authorities putting their LEA hats on through ADEW, and we desperately try to work with the Welsh Assembly Government regionally to drive some of these initiatives. To go back to your original point, we were successful in the early days, because we had structures set up across regions to deliver on workforce remodelling, and the workforce agreement monitoring group, for example, nominated persons. Therefore, we could do with some support from the Welsh Assembly Government to establish an infrastructure, and that could be done through 'Making the Connections', which would enable us to have four vibrant consortia to go some way towards keeping this at the top of the agenda.

[84] **Gareth Jones:** On that note, and on behalf of the committee, I thank you for what has been a useful and informative scrutiny session. We wish you all the best in the very responsible work that faces you.

[85] Diolch yn fawr iawn a dymuniadau Thank you very much and best wishes.
gorau.

10.34 a.m.

Cynnig Trefniadol Procedural Motion

[86] **Gareth Jones:** David Melding has just reminded me that we need a procedural motion for the committee to go into private session.

[87] **David Melding:** I propose that

the committee resolves to exclude the public from the next phase of the meeting in accordance with Standing Order No. 10.37(vi).

[88] I see that the committee is in agreement.

*Derbyniwyd y cynnig.
Motion carried.*

*Daeth rhan gyhoeddus y cyfarfod i ben am 10.34 a.m.
The public part of the meeting ended at 10.34 a.m.*