



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

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

**Dydd Iau, 18 Mehefin 2009
Thursday, 18 June 2009**

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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
Paul Davies	Ceidwadwyr Cymreig (dirprwyo ar ran David Melding) Welsh Conservatives (substituting for David Melding)
Nerys Evans	Plaid Cymru The Party of Wales
Gareth Jones	Plaid Cymru (Cadeirydd y Pwyllgor) The Party of Wales (Committee Chair)
Huw Lewis	Llafur Labour
Jenny Randerson	Democratiaid Rhyddfrydol Cymru Welsh Liberal Democrats

Eraill yn bresennol
Others in attendance

Chris Jones	Cyfarwyddwr addysg, Cyngor Caerdydd Director of Education, Cardiff City Council
Jeff Jones	HMI, Estyn
Dr Chris Llewelyn	Cyfarwyddwr Dysgu Gydol Oes, Cymdeithas Llywodraeth Leol Cymru Director of Lifelong Learning, Welsh Local Government Association
Mike Maguire	HMI Estyn

Swyddogion Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru yn bresennol
National Assembly for Wales officials in attendance

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

Dechreuodd y cyfarfod am 1 p.m.
The meeting began at 1 p.m.

Cyflwyniad ac Ymddiheuriadau
Introduction and Apologies

[1] **Gareth Jones:** Prynhawn da i chi i gyd a chroeso cynnes i gyfarfod y Pwyllgor Menter a Dysgu. Gwnaf y cyhoeddiadau arferol. Fe'ch atgoffaf i ddiffodd ffonau symudol ac unrhyw ddyfais electronig arall. Ni fydd angen cyffwrdd â'r meicroffonau o gwbl yn ystod ein trafodaethau. Nid ydym yn disgwyl ymarfer tân, felly, os bydd larwm yn seinio, rhaid gadael yr ystafell o dan

Gareth Jones: Good afternoon to you all and a warm welcome to this meeting of the Enterprise and Learning Committee. I will make the usual announcements. I remind everyone to switch off their mobile phones and any other electronic devices. There is no need to touch the microphones at all during our discussions. We do not expect a fire drill, so, if an alarm sounds, we will have to leave

gyfarwyddyd y tywysyddion. Mae'r cyfarfod yn ddwyieithog. Mae modd clywed y gwasanaeth cyfieithu ar y pryd o'r Gymraeg i'r Saesneg ar sianel 1 eich clustffonau a'r sain wreiddiol wedi'i chwyddleisio ar sianel 0. Bydd Cofnod o'r cyfan a ddywedir yn gyhoeddus. Yr ydym wedi cael ymddiheuriadau gan Jeff Cuthbert, David Melding a Sandy Mewies, ond ni ddaeth unrhyw fanylion am ddirprwyon i law.

the room following the instructions of the ushers. The meeting will be conducted bilingually. The simultaneous translation from Welsh to English can be found on channel 1 of the headsets, and the original audio is amplified on channel 0. A Record will be produced of all that is said in public. We have received apologies from Jeff Cuthbert, David Melding and Sandy Mewies, but not any details of substitutions.

1.01 p.m.

Swyddogaeth Llywodraethwyr Ysgolion yng Nghymru The Role of School Governors in Wales

[2] **Gareth Jones:** Symudwn at y sesiwn graffu ar swyddogaeth llywodraethwyr ysgolion yng Nghymru. Fel gair byr o gefndir, yn gynharach eleni, bu inni gyhoeddi adroddiad ar weithredu cytundeb llwyth gwaith athrawon, ac yr oedd amryw o argymhellion yr adroddiad yn ymwneud â swyddogaeth llywodraethwyr ysgolion. Mae hyn oll wedi deillio o hynny, felly. Yr oedd yr Aelodau'n unfryd bod angen inni edrych i mewn i'r mater hwn drwy gynnal ymchwiliad byr. Yr ydym eisoes wedi cael tystiolaeth gan Jane Hutt, y Gweinidog dros Blant, Addysg, Dysgu Gydol Oes a Sgiliau, gan swyddogion y Llywodraeth, Llywodraethwyr Cymru, Cymdeithas Genedlaethol y Prifathrawon, a Chymdeithas Arweinwyr Ysgolion a Cholegau. Hon yw'r ail sesiwn dystiolaeth a'r olaf ar y pwnc.

Gareth Jones: We will move to the scrutiny session on the role of school governors in Wales. As a brief word of introduction, earlier this year, we published a report on the implementation of the teachers' workload agreement, and several recommendations in the report were about the role of school governors. This all results from that, therefore. Members were unanimously of the opinion that we needed to look into this issue by holding a brief inquiry. We have already received evidence from Jane Hutt, the Minister for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills, from Government officials, Governors Wales, the National Association of Head Teachers, and the Association of School and College Leaders. This is the second and final evidence-gathering session on the matter.

[3] Yr ydym yn hynod ddiolchgar am bresenoldeb, ar ran Cymdeithas Llywodraeth Leol Cymru, y Dr Chris Llewelyn, y cyfarwyddwr dysgu gydol oes, a Chris Jones, cyfarwyddwr addysg Cyngor Caerdydd. Croeso iddynt. Gwn fod Dr Chris Llewelyn yn ddyr prysur yn y Cynulliad ac nid dyma'r tro cyntaf, na'r olaf, mae'n siŵr, inni gyfarfod ar draws y bwrdd fel hyn. Yr ydym yn gwerthfawrogi amser y ddau ohonoch. Yr ydym yn ddiolchgar am y dystiolaeth ysgrifenedig yr ydym eisoes wedi ei derbyn a chael cyfle i'w darllen. Yr wyf yn eich gwahodd i wneud cyflwyniad byr o ryw bum munud os ydych yn teimlo bod angen ategu pwyntiau eich tystiolaeth ysgrifenedig, a chawn gyfle wedyn i ofyn cwestiynau.

We are extremely grateful for the presence this afternoon, on behalf of the Welsh Local Government Association, of Dr Chris Llewelyn, the director of lifelong learning, and Chris Jones, the director of education for Cardiff Council. Welcome. I know that Dr Chris Llewelyn is a busy man in the Assembly and this is not the first or even the last time we will meet across the table like this. We appreciate your time, both of you. We are grateful for the written evidence that we have already received and had an opportunity to read. I invite you to make a brief presentation of around five minutes, if you want to elaborate on the points made in your written evidence, and we will then have an opportunity to ask questions.

[4] **Dr Llewelyn:** Diolch am y croeso,

Dr Llewelyn: Thank you for the welcome,

Gadeirydd. Diolch hefyd i Chris Jones am fod yma ar ran y gymdeithas a Chymdeithas Cyfarwyddwyr Addysg Cymru. Nid oes dim byd gennym i'w gyflwyno yn ychwanegol at yr hyn sydd yn y dystiolaeth ysgrifenedig, felly, gyda'ch caniatâd, Gadeirydd, efallai y gallem fynd yn syth at y cwestiynu.

Chair. I also thank Chris Jones for being here on behalf of the WLGA and the Association of Directors of Education in Wales. We have nothing further to present to what is in our written evidence, so, with your permission, Chair, perhaps we could move immediately to the questioning.

[5] **Gareth Jones:** Iawn. Paul sydd â'r cwestiwn cyntaf.

Gareth Jones: Fine. Paul has the first question.

[6] **Paul Davies:** I want to focus my questions on training for governors in general terms. I know that that is important and, from your evidence, there is a correlation between attendance at training events and excellence at school inspections. In that case, do you think that these training courses should be compulsory? If so, could that be a disincentive to some people to become governors?

[7] Some local authorities provide training for chairs and vice-chairs, but others do not. Do you think that they should receive a special package of training, given their leadership role, and should the training provided to governors in general be competency based, with some sort of assessment and possibly even certification?

[8] My final question is that it is clear that some authorities provide induction and support for newly qualified headteachers on the role of working with governors, but others do not. Should that be compulsory?

[9] **Dr Llewelyn:** If I may come in first, I will answer on the generality of the issues that you raised, and then perhaps Chris can come in and add some detail on his experiences in Cardiff. On the substantive part of the question, there is an issue about training being a disincentive. The position on most aspects of the work of governors varies from authority to authority, and school to school. It is clear that, in some areas, there are problems with take-up, and people are sometimes reluctant to take the opportunity to be a school governor. We would not want to do anything that was seen as an impediment or a barrier, or that would inhibit people from becoming governors. There is a school of thought that compulsory training might act as an impediment, so we would need to look at that carefully.

[10] On the other aspects of your question, you mentioned training for chairs and vice-chairs, and that is a separate issue. There needs to be some trade-off between what might be seen as an impediment to participation on the one hand, and the demand for expertise and knowledge on the other. Some roles are more important than others. There is evidence in the work that Estyn has done, in academic research, and in some work that we have done in partnership with the Welsh Assembly Government to suggest that the educational attainment and achievement of pupils and added value in the educational process are linked to good governance, and, to achieve good governance, some element of training and understanding of the role is needed, as well as an understanding of strategic management. It may be that the kind of training that we envisage for chairs and vice-chairs is different from the training available for other members of governing bodies. That is borne out in some of the evidence from Estyn's work, but it is also evident from some of the work that we have done with the Assembly Government in recent years on the Narrowing the Gap project. We looked at schools that were bucking the trend, as it were, where the socioeconomic circumstances suggest certain levels of attainment and achievement. There are schools in Gwent that buck that trend and that outperform what would be expected of schools in those socioeconomic circumstances, and, if you look at the characteristics that those schools share, you see that good governance is the key.

[11] **Gareth Jones:** Mr Jones, would you like to add anything?

[12] **Mr C. Jones:** On the first point, I do not think that anyone in the education world would question the assertion that good training and support for governors is linked to good governance and that that is a prerequisite for an effective school. However, as with teacher training over the past 10 years, we have got locked into the notion of training being something that happens to a governor outside the context of the governing body, involving attending a session that raises their knowledge, skills and understanding. That kind of training still plays its part, and, as legislation changes, it is necessary for governors to be kept up to speed on such changes. However, in my authority, our experience has been that good governance can sometimes be facilitated not so much through those discrete training packages, but through engaging the governing body as a whole in self-evaluation sessions. The self-evaluation is bespoke and is put in the context of the school. So, although we have an extensive training programme in Cardiff, we are trying to encourage governing bodies to move away from the notion of sending people out for training, and to focus more on officers going in to support them in their work.

1.10 p.m.

[13] The second point reinforces Chris's point that, inevitably in the modern world, governance is no longer a matter of a group of people all doing the same thing. Of course, they are all charged with being community leaders, and that is their role in the school, but Estyn confirms that, in good governance arrangements, one thing that is very clear is that individuals have particular responsibilities within the governing body. One aspect of training that we need to focus on is the fact that, for example, the chair of finance does not need the same support or training as the chair of a human resources or other committee. We need to ensure that we are offering governors not some generalised training that is of limited use to everyone but good training that is of specific use to a few.

[14] I think that there is a case for mandatory training for chairs of the board, given their unique position. However, as Chris has articulated—and I agree absolutely—we are seeing some evidence now that, with the increased responsibilities on governors, retaining and recruiting them is getting more difficult. One issue that is presented to us as a barrier is the level of responsibility that governors have, which has to be balanced with their day jobs, their families, and other commitments. If the committee is thinking about recommending compulsory training for all governors, it ought to think carefully about the fact that the benefits have to be balanced against the potential to discourage people from becoming governors at all, because that would just be seen as an additional responsibility.

[15] On your last question about the role of headteachers, it is often left as the last question in governance, and yet headteachers are invariably governors themselves, and they are a special type of governor, as the lead professional in the school. One thing that I know the committee is concerned about is the governance and work-life balance for headteachers. There are some developments with regard to headteachers and their link with governing bodies that are not being fully exploited in our schools. One of those—and I believe that you may have considered it before; it is certainly in the evidence—is the anxiety of people who become headteachers that they will immediately have to work with governing bodies, given that their experience of that is sometimes limited. If they do not get off to the best start in their relationship with the governors, particularly the chair, that will often have consequences later.

[16] In my authority, we are encouraging headteachers to involve their deputies more fully in the governance of schools, and I believe that that is happening in other authorities now, too. We think that that has two positive impacts. One is that, for succession planning, we are encouraging deputies, who aspire to be headteachers eventually, to gain that experience of

engaging with governors in meetings. The other impact is more directly related to your considerations, in that, because governance in a school is an onerous burden for headteachers, as it is for the chair and for others, we believe that it can be shared with the deputy. For example, you have received some evidence from professional associations about the anxieties of headteachers who can sometimes find themselves in meeting after meeting of sub-committees of governing bodies, which has an impact on their ability to carry out their core work. If we could involve deputies and assistant headteachers more actively in school governance, they could be servicing and attending sub-committees, and headteachers could be more focused on the strategic work, which is as it should be. When those deputies and assistant heads become headteachers themselves, they will already have had some experience of that work.

[17] **Gareth Jones:** Thank you for that, Chris. However, I will just mention in passing that we have also taken evidence that suggests that certain schools do not feel as though they have the opportunity or resources even to appoint deputy headteachers. I know that the situation varies from school to school, but it is a point that has been raised with us in evidence.

[18] **Jenny Randerson:** I have two very different questions. The first follows on from what Chris has just said about the difficulties in recruiting governors. We have heard that the vacancy rate is fairly consistent at around 5 to 6 per cent. However, there are clearly difficulties in some areas. Do you have any information on regional trends or on areas or types of school that have higher vacancy rates than others? You are clearly worried about recruitment. Do you have any information on best practice from some local education authorities, such as initiatives taken to encourage more people to become governors?

[19] **Mr C. Jones:** I can give you some information on the trends, but it would be based on one authority. I suspect that the trends that we see in Cardiff would be similar across our more urban areas. Our vacancy rate is running slightly above the national rate, for the possibly obvious reason that we have a dense concentration of schools. We have more than 120 schools, all of which need governors, in a relatively small geographical area. However, that is not the rule of thumb in Cardiff, and there are always exceptions. I need to make that very clear. As a rule, we find it easier to recruit governors in areas that are relatively affluent. In Cardiff, which Jenny knows very well, there are areas to the north where people are queuing up to be governors, particularly parents who want to be actively involved in the education of their children. In some areas, where there is significant economic deprivation, that is not the case. The irony is that it is very often in those schools that we need greater community involvement. Unfortunately, that is a trend, but we are consciously working on it.

[20] On different types of governors, as you know, there are different strands, and, generally speaking—and I believe that this is true across Wales—there is not an issue with so-called ‘LEA governors’, or, interestingly, with foundation governors, who largely manage voluntary-aided schools. In Cardiff, a significant proportion of our schools is voluntary aided, and the archdiocese often takes the responsibility for identifying those governors, doing a very good job. So, we do not generally have a problem in voluntary-aided schools, and we do not generally have a problem with LEA governors. Where we have problems, they are generally with parent governors and, occasionally, with co-opted governors.

[21] On strategies, again, I can talk only about Cardiff, although I am sure that there are even better strategies working elsewhere. We have found that one of the best strategies is to get local council members active in recruiting in their locality as well as in the school. In the late 1990s, there was experience of LEAs simply saying to schools, ‘You need to engage better with your community and then you will get the parent governors’, but those schools were already working hard with their community, and I think that that was unreasonable. We have had some success with local council members, through the LEA link, when we have asked them to go out into their communities and try to help us to recruit.

[22] **Dr Llewelyn:** Our perception is also that the biggest difficulty is with parent governors. We do not have the detailed information that I suspect you are asking for, but I am more than happy to liaise with the clerk at the end of this session to get that information to you on trends in vacancies and on strategies for combating vacancies and identifying best practice. We can do that and if, during the course of the session, there are other bits of information that you would like, we could pursue those, too.

1.20 p.m.

[23] **Jenny Randerson:** The teaching unions told us that it is their impression that there has been a reduction in the support offered by local authorities to governors, and that they have concerns about the expertise of human resources departments in dealing with issues relating to schools. I have been a governor of several schools, both primary and secondary, and I was chair of the board of one school for 10 years, and it was the HR issues that really used to worry me. At the school at which I am now a governor, very recently, we had to deal with a really tricky HR issue. It was not an individual issue but a restructuring issue. We needed loads of advice and support from the local authority—which we got, I hasten to add. Do you think that teaching unions are right in their assessment that there has been a reduction in the levels of support? Is there a way of increasing the specific education HR expertise of governing bodies?

[24] **Dr Llewelyn:** On the last part of your question, that is always the case, and there is room for further discussion on creating additional capacity and giving additional advice. The position across Wales varies from authority to authority, because the circumstances that they face are different, as are the traditions. I looked at the written submissions that the teaching unions provided and identified that they were highlighting perceived weaknesses in support services. I know that Estyn is giving oral evidence later this afternoon, so it may be an issue that you can raise with it. I am not entirely clear that the scale of the problem is as indicated in the written evidence from the teaching unions, but it may need further discussion. The recent Estyn inspections that I have looked at have been relatively generous about the support services within authorities. I know that the support services in authorities in Pembrokeshire and Newport are deemed to be very good. It may be that performance is patchy, but I am not clear that it is as depicted in some of the written evidence that you have received. I recognise that it may be an issue that needs further discussion or investigation.

[25] **Mr C. Jones:** I will add two things to that, which may be of interest. One is that it is almost inevitable that the evidence that you get from teaching unions illustrates that point, because, after all, teachers' and headteachers' unions traditionally engage with schools when there are difficulties. Where schools do not have difficulties, very often, they do not have much contact with professional associations. So, I can understand why professional associations have a certain perception; it is because it is they who are drawn into any difficulties.

[26] Since 1996, I have worked in a variety of roles in Cardiff, and the one thing that we can definitely concede is that the relentless focus on standards and on other developments in relation to teachers' workload has produced additional burdens on school governance and therefore on individual governors. It has been a challenge for local authorities to keep up with the additional responsibility to provide support, but I believe that my local authority has kept up. We have made specialist appointments to deal with education issues, not necessarily in my service area, but sometimes in the central HR department or the central legal department. We need to continue to do that.

[27] Chris made reference to other authorities that have been inspected recently. We were inspected last year, and the view regarding the council's HR service for schools was that it

was good, although the inspectors did point out that there were inconsistencies in some areas. As a local authority, we absolutely understand why governors need the comfort of having proper HR and legal advice, and we understand that those who are amateurs, if you like, rather than professionals get anxious when there are difficulties. My perspective is that we are continuing to give them good advice, although we recognise that, with added responsibilities and burdens, we will have to continue to be better to keep up.

[28] **Gareth Jones:** Diolch yn fawr ichi, a **Gareth Jones:** Thank you, and thank you, Dr diolch, Dr Llewelyn, am y cynnig i ddod yn Llewelyn, for your offer to come back to us ôl atom gyda'r manylion hynny. with those details. We appreciate that very Gwerthfawrogwn hynny'n fawr. much.

[29] **Huw Lewis:** My question is, again, on training. Going back to the evidence that we took from Governors Wales, as I recall, training was not seen as a potential barrier to recruitment. In fact, at one point, we were told that the absence of training could be a barrier to recruitment in certain circumstances, as people were not being provided with the self-confidence to dive straight into the job. For me, that would certainly be the case. I would not want to get involved in governorship without any kind of prior acquaintance with the role. However, Governors Wales was much more concerned about the accessibility and standardisation of training across the country, because there is a patchy picture. People are busy holding down other jobs, and it is difficult to access training, and so on.

[30] One suggestion was to look at online training, which raises a series of questions, to my mind. First, should we in Wales not be looking towards some kind of good, standard, and standardised level of modular training for governors, perhaps delivered online? If so, should we not be looking for a training partner to help us to develop that kind of system? The one that springs immediately to my mind is the Open University, which does this kind of work with NHS employees all the time. Indeed, it also works in the education sector. Are we not in danger of institutionalising amateurism to such an extent that the increasing demands of education policy will just leave people feeling swamped and wanting to opt out of governorship?

[31] **Dr Llewelyn:** Many of those are valid points. As for training being a barrier or an impediment, it cuts both ways. As I mentioned earlier, it is clear that an appropriate level of training and an understanding of the requirements and demands of the role, as well as of what we mean by strategic management are essential. In providing voluntary opportunities for training, one would hope that you address both those issues: for those who are put off because of a lack of knowledge or understanding, training would be available to fill that gap; if some are put off or intimidated by the training itself, the voluntary nature of it would accommodate their views.

[32] I recognise that, ideally, we want to get to the position of having a consistent approach. An online approach to training sounds as though it has some merit and would be worthy of further investigation. However, I should say that there would have to be an evaluation of the potential of that kind of training; you would want assurances about the quality and status of it, so that there was broad understanding on a range of issues. The other element is the cost of the provision. There should be an understanding that the additional benefits provided outweighed the cost of such a service. However, my immediate reaction is that it is worthy of further investigation.

[33] **Mr C. Jones:** I agree with all that. I do not think that we are taking full advantage of technology, as we should be, in training or in the dissemination of information to governors. It is not just a training issue.

1.30 p.m.

[34] On the last point about consistency, there have been some examples of consistent training, such as the performance management regime of headteachers, which was rolled out across Wales, and local authorities played their part in that. As I said earlier, for chairs, I see the importance of having that kind of baseline of knowledge and understanding. On the programme that we run in Cardiff, we get feedback from participating governors that they like the training to be relevant to the context in which they find themselves. We need to be careful about training. Standardised training that provides quality assurance and a certain benchmarking would be positive but, beyond that, governors and governing bodies find themselves in particular circumstances and we want to try to provide training that is as bespoke as possible.

[35] **Christine Chapman:** You comment in point 9 on Estyn's evidence, which mentions governing bodies being critical friends. To what extent are the majority of governing bodies critical friends or are there still issues with that? All governing bodies have different relationships with the headteachers. Can you comment on the extent to which governing bodies are critical friends?

[36] On training, I have been told that there could now be difficulty with governors having time off from employment. Are you aware of that? Is this situation getting worse because of the economic downturn? Are there pressures there?

[37] My last point relates to the diversity of people who sit on governing bodies. How satisfied are you that diverse people are serving on governing bodies? You mentioned that there is an issue in more deprived areas, for example. Do you have any comments on that?

[38] **Dr Llewelyn:** On members being allowed the time to attend meetings of governing bodies, we have picked up on that anecdotally, but, again, I do not have authoritative information. We could consult authorities relatively easily to see if this is emerging as an issue and feed that information back to you, perhaps with the other information that we were going to provide.

[39] **Mr C. Jones:** On your first question, one of the most important additional responsibilities that has been placed on governing bodies in the last 10 years has been the focus on monitoring standards for children and young people. Increasingly, people are recognising that as being the core business of education. The challenge there, and this would be true in Cardiff—I suspect that it is a facet of human nature, so it is probably true elsewhere—is that, sometimes, we have to persuade governors who have an intense loyalty and commitment to the school and its community to remember that the phrase is 'critical friend' and not just 'friend'.

[40] I think that, in Cardiff, we have little experience of governors not being properly committed to the school's work and its place in the community. We sometimes have governors who are unwilling or unable to perform the 'critical' part of holding to account the headteacher and the staff in the school on raising standards. It seems to me that two groups of people have responsibility, one of whom is the headteacher. This is not only a matter for the governing body. I believe that headteachers have an important role in developing a relationship with the governors that, frankly, is not a cosy, 'They are my best friends and will be loyal to every decision I make' relationship. It should be more of a, 'They will be loyal to the children and the young people in the school and, where necessary, will properly question the decisions that I have made' kind of relationship. We encourage and oblige—we should oblige in law—our headteachers to develop that relationship with their governors. Local authorities also have that role; this is not only a matter for headteachers. We have a special relationship with governing bodies. Right across Wales, not only in Cardiff, we try to develop that relationship, sending officers into schools to meet headteachers and the whole governing

body.

[41] In Cardiff, as some of you will know, we feed back formally to governing bodies every year on school standards—we help the governing bodies to fulfil that role. So, the challenges there—I am repeating myself—are to do with human nature. People become governors for a variety of reasons, but the core reason seems to us to be intense loyalty and commitment to the children, the community and the school. We need to help them to include the ‘critical’ with the ‘friend’ bit.

[42] On your second question, there is, absolutely, an issue with when governors should meet and when they should train. We in Cardiff are fortunate, because we are a large authority in terms of the number of schools, so we can put on an extensive annual training programme for governors. We try to repeat courses twice, if we can; once in the day and again in the evening, just for those reasons. However, your question uncovers a more fundamental point, in that we now see from time to time some tensions about when governing bodies should meet. One or two headteachers are now asking why, if governance is a professional part of their job, they have to come back in the evening for governing body meetings. The reality is that, until we move to a much more radical form of governance, for as long as governors are volunteers, the timing of governing body meetings should largely be a matter for the governors. We will always have that tension. That will not go away for some time to come.

[43] **Christine Chapman:** May I just pick up on that? The problem with that is that you will tend not to have a range of people who can serve. For example, if you are meeting in the afternoon, you could argue that people who are unemployed or retired would be fine with that, but there are other people in the community, and it is a matter of representing that community and of how effectively the job can be done if you only have one type of person on the governing body. I know that that is over-simplifying things, probably, but I think that you get my point.

[44] **Mr C. Jones:** We see examples of that fairly regularly in Cardiff. We approach people to be LEA governors who would be more than able and very willing to do that job but, practically, they cannot fit that role in with their work commitments. That is particularly true, unfortunately, of people who do shift work. Not all members of a governing body are in work, but of those who are, it is increasingly the case that they have day jobs. It is a cause of regret for us that more manual workers, who work less consistent hours, are often excluded. That is a concern. It is linked to your last point, of course, about how a governing body reflects the community that it claims to serve. Authorities such as Cardiff are relatively lucky in that our schools are fairly close together and we consciously try to reflect the community and the school on that governing body. We will work with community groups, some of which will represent ethnic or other minority groups, to try to encourage that. We carry out equality impact assessments on governors on recruitment. We have not got that right by any means—we have some governing bodies that broadly represent the communities that they serve and some that do not. It is an issue that we regularly bring to their attention, and we, and other authorities, work with community-representative agencies to try to reflect their diversity.

[45] **Nerys Evans:** Mae fy nghwestiwn yn ymwneud â rôl llywodraethwyr wrth ffedereiddio ysgolion. Mae'n bwnc pwysig iawn i ysgolion yn y canolbarth a'r gorllewin yn benodol. **Nerys Evans:** My question is on the role of governors in federating schools. This subject is very important in mid and west Wales in particular.

[46] O siarad â sawl llywodraethwr yn y gorllewin, ymddengys nad ydynt yn siŵr o'u rôl o ran dechrau'r broses o ffedereiddio os **From talking to several governors in west Wales, it appears that they are unsure about their role in initiating the process of**

dynt am weld dyfodol i'w hysgolion. Holais Llywodraethwyr Cymru yr wythnos diwethaf ynglŷn â rôl llywodraethwyr wrth ddechrau'r broses hon, a chadarnhaodd y Gweinidog fod ganddynt rôl i ddod atoch chi fel awdurdodau lleol i ddechrau'r broses o ffedereiddio. Ni chefais ateb clir iawn gan Llywodraethwyr Cymru ynglŷn â rôl llywodraethwyr yn y broses hon.

federating if they want to see a future for their schools. I asked Governors Wales last week about the role of governors in initiating this process, and the Minister confirmed that they have a role in approaching you as local authorities to commence the federation process. I have not yet received a clear answer from Governors Wales about the role of governors in this process.

[47] Y pwynt sylweddol yw bod angen rhoi gwybod i lywodraethwyr beth yn union yw eu pwerau. Yr ydym wedi trafod hyfforddiant, ac yr wyf yn siŵr bod hynny ynghlwm wrth y peth hefyd. A ydych yn ffyddiog bod llywodraethwyr yn gwybod beth yw eu rôl yn y maes hwn? Testun pryder yw nad yw'r corff cenedlaethol, Llywodraethwyr Cymru, yn llawn ymwybodol o rôl llywodraethwyr yn hyn o beth. Nid yw'r neges yn cyrraedd pobl ar lawr gwlad. Beth yw eich rôl yn hyn i gyd i wella effeithlonrwydd ysgolion?

The substantive point is that governors should be informed of their full powers. We have debate training, and I am sure that that, too, is tied up in this issue. Are you confident that governors know what their role is in this field? It is a matter of concern that the national organisation, Governors Wales, does not fully know what the governors' role is in this regard. The message is not reaching people on the ground. What is your role in all this to improve school efficiency?

1.40 p.m.

[48] Mae rheoliadau yn dod allan ar ddiwedd y flwyddyn ynglŷn â ffedereiddio cyrff llywodraethu. Dywedodd y Gweinidog eich bod yn awyddus i gefnogi llywodraethwyr i fabwysiadu'r cyfleoedd hyn. Sut y byddech yn gwneud hynny?

Regulations are coming out at the end of the year about the federation of governing bodies. The Minister said that you are keen to support governors in taking these opportunities forward. How would you do that?

[49] **Mr C. Jones:** I suspect that my answer would be less than satisfactory, only because the issue in more rural areas is quite different and, obviously, my own experience has been largely in an urban setting. Interestingly, however, as you have said, the statutory framework is the same. I think that that may be part of the problem, that there is one statutory framework that is trying to do a number of different things. I agree that, on the basis of the experience of other colleagues—and I suspect that Chris would know better than me—the issue about federation is very different in a rural setting than in an urban context. However, we are interested in federation, even in an urban setting.

[50] I will just try to pick up your questions one by one. My understanding is that although, within the regulations, the promoter would have to be the local authority, or the diocese or archdiocese in the case of a voluntary-aided school, the initiative can come from wherever it needs to come from in the community. We know that, when statutory proposals reach the Minister, she will take into account where the proposals came from. I certainly do not believe that there is any barrier to local communities, including governors, bringing ideas on federation and related community ideas to the local authorities. I would be surprised if authorities did not welcome that, because when we promote and propose things, we nearly always have difficulties with the local communities and it seems to me that it would be a good start if the idea came from the local community. I would be surprised if the local authorities were not positive about that.

[51] You have made reference to the lack of clarity around respective roles. I think that

that is because the framework is still relatively new. I certainly believe that, in the few places in Wales where federation has started—it has started in some places—there is a sense that we are all watching with interest to see what the teething problems are. In terms of governance and governors, my understanding of the legislation is that there is certainly nothing in it that is a threat to governors or governance. I certainly believe—I have said it before and I will repeat it—that there is a very clear role for community leaders, which includes governors, in bringing forward these proposals to local authorities. I think that that would be very positive.

[52] The federation regulations themselves are new to local authorities and, therefore, to governors. If the notion behind your question is that local authorities have not worked hard enough, perhaps, to explain the regulations to governors, then I think that we will have to look at that. I suspect that the experience in my authority is not quite the same as the one that you were talking about. The discussions in my authority have been largely around the notion of federating secondary schools in the context of the education of 14 to 19-year-olds. We certainly have been out there talking to governors about that, but that is one authority and that is one particular type of federation. We have tried to explain that to them, but the anxiety that you were expressing, they are feeling as well. They are jumping ahead to questions like, ‘How will you combine two governing bodies so that both bodies feel that they have an equal contribution?’. The anxiety that you were reflecting in your question is there and we need to do more to try to meet that, if we can, more fully.

[53] **Dr Llewelyn:** Broadly, I agree with that. We want to see a situation where the ability to create federations of schools empowers communities and local authorities in terms of addressing their school reorganisation issues, rather than it being seen as an impediment. As Chris was suggesting, it may be the case that all the various stakeholders are feeling their way on this, which might explain the lack of clarity or lack of understanding. If there is confusion on this, we would certainly be prepared to contribute to creating more clarity. Generally, it is a positive development.

[54] **Nerys Evans:** Yn amlwg yr oedd honno'n drafodaeth ynglŷn â ffedereiddio ysgolion, ond beth am y rheoliadau sy'n dod allan ar ddiwedd y flwyddyn ynglŷn â ffedereiddio cyrff llywodraethu? Dywedodd y Gweinidog fod y syniad gwreiddiol i'w gwneud yn haws i ffedereiddio ysgolion wedi deillio o'r awdurdodau addysg, a bod awdurdodau lleol yn awyddus i chwarae rhan flaenllaw yn y gwaith o sicrhau bod cyrff llywodraethu yn ymwybodol o'r cyfleoedd y mae'r rheoliadau hynny yn eu creu. Beth yn union fydd eich rôl ar ôl i'r rheoliadau hynny gael eu pasio ar ddiwedd y flwyddyn?

Nerys Evans: That was obviously a discussion about the federation of schools, but what about the regulations that are being issued at the end of the year about the federation of governing bodies? The Minister said that the original idea of making it easier to federate schools came from the education authorities, and that local authorities were keen to play a key role in ensuring that governing bodies were aware of the opportunities that those regulations will create. What will your role be once those regulations are passed at the end of the year?

[55] **Dr Llewelyn:** Mae'n ddatblygiad y byddai'r awdurdod lleol ac y byddem ni fel corff yn ei groesawu. Mae rôl yn bodoli yn awr ynghylch darparu gwybodaeth i'r llywodraethwyr a'r cyrff llywodraethu. Efallai y gallai Chris egluro sut yn union mae'r gwaith hwnnw'n cael ei gyflawni, neu sut y gallai gael ei gyflawni.

Dr Llewelyn: It is a development that local authorities and we, as an organisation, would welcome. There is a role now in respect of providing information to governors and governing bodies. Perhaps Chris would be able to explain exactly how that work is done, or how it could be done.

[56] **Mr C. Jones:** I need to be careful, as I can speak on behalf of only one authority; I cannot comment about how other authorities are approaching this. The issue regarding the

federation of governing bodies is fairly new and novel. We felt that that particular proposal arose largely from issues to do with more rural settings, where there were relatively small schools that intended to have governance that covered more than one school. My response is very much on the principle of that. There will be some practicalities, but I am sure that we can iron those out.

[57] As far as we in Cardiff are concerned, there would be no difficulty at all if a governing body came to talk to us about that. Clearly, the ability to make progress with those proposals would depend on there being an equal desire or willingness on the part of the other governing body. We would have difficulties if we were presented with differing views on that. However, my understanding of those regulations, as and if they come out, is that they will be positive, and that they will do something to help our recruitment. The principle of one governing body looking after more than one institute is not new in any case. As you know, not so long ago, where there were separate infant and junior schools they were often looked after by one governing body, so this is not completely new to us. However, as far as my authority is concerned, we have no difficulty with the principle, and we would warmly welcome two or more governing bodies who had an equal view on this coming to us and us being positive about it.

[58] **Gareth Jones:** Dyna ddiwedd y cwestiynau. Hoffwn ddiolch i'r ddau ohonoch am rannu eich gwybodaeth a'ch profiadau gyda ni. Yr wyf yn siŵr ein bod, fel Aelodau, yn derbyn y ffaith bod hwn yn fater sensitif tu hwnt, a bod angen troedio'n ofalus. Yr ydym yn ymdrin â chyrff gwirfoddol, ac yr ydym hefyd, drwy'r gyfundrefn addysg, wedi eu gorlwytho â chyfrifoldebau. Mae'r cyfrifoldebau hynny'n cynnwys rhai megis monitro perfformiad—soniodd Chris am hynny—ac eraill, ac mae llawer i'w wneud i sicrhau bod ein llywodraethwyr yn cael y cymorth a'r arweiniad, neu beth bynnag y bo, i fod yn hyderus wrth gyflawni'r gwaith. Yr wyf wedi bod yn gwranddo'n ofalus ar y dystiolaeth, a gofynaf weithiau tybed a ydym yn gofyn gormod o'n llywodraethwyr? Wedi dweud hynny, mae ysgolion lle mae llywodraethwyr tu hwnt o effeithiol, a lle mae pethau'n gweithio yn arbennig o dda. Y neges yw bod yn rhaid inni fod yn ofalus gyda pha bynnag argymhellion yr ydym yn eu rhoi gerbron y Gweinidog, oherwydd mae'n faes mor sensitif.

[59] Diolch ichi am rannu hynny gyda ni. Yr ydym yn gwerthfawrogi eich amser a'ch cyfraniadau. Yn sicr, mae wedi rhoi rhywbeth inni feddwl amdano ac i'w ystyried yn ddwys ynglŷn â'r ffordd ymlaen. Dymuniadau gorau ichi, a diolch am eich presenoldeb y prynhawn yma.

Gareth Jones: That brings the questions to an end. I thank both of you for sharing this information and your experiences with us. I am sure that all of us, as Members, accept the fact that this is an extremely sensitive issue, and that we need to tread carefully. We are dealing with voluntary bodies, but also, through the education system, we have overburdened them with responsibilities. Those responsibilities include performance monitoring—Chris talked about that—among others, and there is some way to go to ensure that our governors receive the assistance and the leadership, or whatever it may be, to enable them to be confident in undertaking their work. I have been listening carefully to the evidence, and I sometimes wonder whether we are asking too much of our governors. Having said that, there are schools where the governors are very effective, and where things work extremely well. The message is that we must be careful with any recommendations that we present to the Minister, because it is such a sensitive area.

Thank you for sharing that with us. We appreciate your time and your contributions. It has certainly given us food for thought and something to consider carefully with regard to the way forward. Best wishes to you both and thank you for your attendance this afternoon.

1.50 p.m.

[60] **Gareth Jones:** Symudwn yn awr i ail ran y sesiwn graffu, sy'n ymwneud â swyddogaeth llywodraethwyr ysgolion yng Nghymru. Yr wyf yn croesawu cynrychiolwyr Estyn, sef Mike Maguire a Jeff Jones, sydd ill dau yn arolygwyr. Diolch yn fawr am ymuno â ni, a diolch am y dystiolaeth ysgrifenedig a gafodd ei dosbarthu i'r Aelodau ac yr ydym eisoes wedi cael cyfle i'w darllen. Gofynnaf ichi wneud cyflwyniad byr o ryw bum munud os oes gennych rai pwyntiau yr hoffech eu pwysleisio. Cawn gyfle wedyn fel Aelodau i ofyn cwestiynau ichi. Ni fydd angen ichi gyffwrdd â'r meicroffonau yn ystod ein trafodaethau. Felly, drosodd i chi.

[61] **Mr J. Jones:** Yn gyntaf, mae'r prif arolygydd, Dr Bill Maxwell, yn anfon ei ymddiheuriadau—mae mewn cyfarfod gydag Andrew Davies, yr Aelod Cynulliad, ar hyn o bryd. Fodd bynnag, yr ydych yn cael dau am bris un, sef Mike a minnau. Yr wyf fi yn arwain un o'r timau yn Estyn a Mike yw ein cyswllt â Llywodraethwyr Cymru. Mae'r ddau ohonom wedi bod yn arolygwyr ers cryn dipyn o flynyddoedd. Bu'r ddau ohonom hefyd yn brifathrawon, ac yn sgil hynny, yn llywodraethwyr. Bu Mike hefyd yn aelod o fyrddau llywodraethu fel athrolywodraethwr, fel prifathro ac fel rhiant. Felly, yn ogystal ag arbenigedd o safbwynt yr arolygiaeth, mae ganddo hefyd brofiad uniongyrchol o fod yn llywodraethwr yn cynrychioli llawer o wahanol feysydd. Felly, rhwng y ddau ohonom, os na allwn ateb agweddau ar y cwestiynau sydd gennych, awn yn ôl a phalu rhagor yn Estyn i roi atebion ysgrifenedig ffurfiol ichi.

[62] Felly, drosodd i chi os ydych am ofyn unrhyw gwestiwn.

[63] **Gareth Jones:** Diolch yn fawr iawn, a diolch am y cynnig i ddod yn ôl atom—yr ydym yn gwerthfawrogi hynny. Nerys Evans sydd â'r cwestiwn cyntaf.

[64] **Nerys Evans:** Yr ydych yn amlinellu yn eich dystiolaeth bod rhai cyrff llywodraethu yn fwy llwyddiannus nag eraill. Er enghraifft, dywedwch fod diffyg cynlluniau gweithredu gan rai cyrff llywodraethwyr mewn ysgolion cynradd.

Gareth Jones: We now move to the second part of the scrutiny session, which involves the function of school governors in Wales. I welcome the Estyn representatives, namely Mike Maguire and Jeff Jones, both of whom are inspectors. Thank you for joining us, and thank you for the written evidence that was distributed to Members and which we have already had an opportunity to read. May I ask you to make a brief presentation of about five minutes if you have some points that you wish to emphasise? We will then have an opportunity to ask you questions as Members. You will not need to touch the microphones during our discussions. So, over to you.

Mr J. Jones: First of all, the chief inspector, Dr Bill Maxwell, sends his apologies—he is currently meeting with Andrew Davies, the Assembly Member. However, you are getting two for the price of one, namely Mike and me. I lead one of the teams in Estyn and Mike is our liaison with Governors Wales. We have both been inspectors for a number of years. We have both also been headteachers, and as such we have been governors. Mike has also been a member of boards of governors as a teacher-governor, a headteacher and as a parent. So, not only does he have expertise from the inspectorate's viewpoint but, he also has first-hand experience of being a governor representing many different areas. So, between the both of us, if we cannot answer aspects of your questions, we will return and dig deeper in Estyn and provide you with formal written answers.

So, over to you if you wish to ask any questions.

Gareth Jones: Thank you very much, and thank you for the offer to come back to us—we appreciate that. Nerys Evans has the first question.

Nerys Evans: You outline in your evidence that some governing bodies are more successful than others. For example, you say that some primary school governing bodies do not have action plans. In secondary schools, you say that schools do not ensure

Mewn ysgolion uwchradd, dywedwch fod diffyg o ran sicrhau bod ysgolion yn bodloni'r anghenion cyfreithiol a rheoliadol. Pam fod y gwahaniaethau hyn yn bodoli rhwng cyrff llywodraethu? Ai mater o hyfforddiant ydyw? Beth yw eich sylwadau ynglŷn â'r diffygion hyn?

that they comply with the legal and regulatory requirements. Why do these differences exist between governing bodies? Is it due to a lack of training? What are your comments on these deficiencies?

[65] **Mr Maguire:** These deficiencies only crop up in a small number of schools, and our evidence clearly shows that three quarters of the schools in Wales are doing a good job. Some outstanding work is being done by governing bodies in about 10 per cent of the schools. In those schools where there are particular difficulties, it is probably due in part to the relationship between the headteacher and the governing body when the headteacher does not give the governors sufficient information. There is a key relationship in this regard between effective governing bodies and the link between the headteacher and those governors. In a small number of governing bodies, we have found that headteachers do not provide governors with sufficient in-depth information for them to make relevant decisions, and so on. We have also found in those governing bodies that are failing, or are not doing a sufficiently good job, that they are not up to speed on the statutory elements of their job with regard to the policy that schools must have in place. They do not review policies regularly; they do not have a timetable for that. So, governors rely to a tremendous extent on the headteacher, and effective headteachers ensure that their governors are well informed.

[66] **Nerys Evans:** Soniasoch am y cysylltiad rhwng y pennaeth a'r corff llywodraethu. Ar eich pwynt olaf am gyrff llywodraethu yn cael gwybod am eu rhwymedigaethau statudol, ai rôl y pennaeth yw gwneud hynny ynteu rôl yr awdurdod addysg leol?

Nerys Evans: You mentioned the connection between the headteacher and the governing body. On your last point about governing bodies being told about their statutory obligations, is it the role of the headteacher or the local education authority to do that?

[67] **Mr J. Jones:** Mae'n gyfuniad o'r ddau. Man cychwyn fyddai'r prifathro. Os yw'r prifathro'n weithredol ac yn arwain yn dda, bydd yn sicrhau bod y llywodraethwyr yn gwybod am eu rôl. Mae hefyd rôl, fel y dywedasoch, gan yr awdurdod lleol. Pan fydd cynrychiolwyr awdurdodau lleol yn gwneud ymweliadau bugeiliol ag ysgolion, dylent ofyn i'r prifathrawon o bryd i'w gilydd, 'Beth ydych chi wedi bod yn ei drafod gyda'ch llywodraethwyr yn ddiweddar?'. Er enghraifft, gallent ofyn a yw'r prifathro wedi bod yn trafod data gyda'r llywodraethwyr. Dyna un o'r manau gwan. Yr oedd ein ffrindiau a oedd yn siarad â chi o'n blaenau ni yn sôn am fod yn ffrindiau beirniadol i'r ysgol. Os nad ydych yn gwybod y cwestiynau beirniadol iawn i'w gofyn i'r prifathro, bydd gennych anhawster—byddwch yn ymbalfalu yn y tywyllwch cyn ichi ddechrau. Mae angen i brifathrawon ac awdurdodau lleol fod yn fwy gweithredol o ran sicrhau bod mwy o wybodaeth ar gael. Eu rôl yw rhoi'r wybodaeth honno i

Mr J. Jones: It is a combination of both. The starting point would be the headteacher. If the headteacher is proactive and leads well, he or she will ensure that the governors know what their role is. The local authority also has a role, as you mentioned. When local authority representatives conduct pastoral visits to schools, they should ask the headteachers from time to time, 'What have you been discussing with your governors recently?'. For example, they could ask whether the headteacher has been discussing data with the governors. That is one of the weak spots. Our friends who were speaking to you before us talked about being a critical friend of the school. If you do not know the right critical questions to ask of the headteacher, you will have difficulty—you will be fumbling around in the dark from the outset. Headteachers and local authorities need to be more proactive in ensuring that there is more information available. Their role is to provide that information to governors so that they can ask these critical questions.

lywodraethwyr er mwyn iddynt allu gofyn y cwestiynau beirniadol hyn.

[68] **Paul Davies:** In your written evidence, you say that:

[69] 'Monitoring and evaluating schools' performance is one of the most important jobs a governing body will be involved in but this is one of the weakest areas in the work of governors.'

[70] How can that be improved, and what mechanisms do you think need to be put in place in order for improvements to be seen in that area?

[71] You go on in your paper to say:

[72] 'In a few schools, governors do not understand their role well enough and are not well...informed'.

[73] That suggests that you would like to see more training provided. Do you think that that training should be compulsory?

[74] Following on from what Nerys Evans was talking about earlier regarding the role of headteachers and governors, it is clear that some authorities provide induction support for newly qualified headteachers on working with governors, but others do not. Do you believe that that should be compulsory?

[75] **Mr Maguire:** There are three questions there. I will talk about the training to start with. It is absolutely essential that authorities provide induction training for headteachers on working with governors. Some new headteachers have very little experience of working with governing bodies. As I said earlier, in one of my responses, that key relationship between chairs of governors and headteachers is undoubtedly crucial to effectiveness in schools. All our evidence suggests that. Therefore, training for headteachers on working with governors should be an integral part of the training provided for them. It could also be included in the national professional qualification for headship. I do not know what the modules in NPQH contain, but I do not think that there is enough emphasis on work with governors, and perhaps we should look at headship training and support for headteachers in that context.

[76] You talked about training for governors and the compulsory element. It is always difficult to introduce a compulsory element. The best governing bodies are those that are well trained. Training is not just about taking governors out of the school context; some of the most effective training that we see is the training of whole governing bodies in situ. Some of the most effective training involves governors joining school staff on school closure days. I have seen very effective training being undertaken with senior members of governing bodies on certain committees on those non-contact days, when they work with the staff or department heads in the schools and are trained with them. That is very effective. The compulsory element is difficult, because, as you know, governors are volunteers. There may be merit in pursuing a compulsory element for the chairs of governors, because, once again, the focus is on the chair.

2.00 p.m.

[77] I will now touch upon the monitoring role. I have done some training with governors this year in three different locations in Wales, run by Governors Wales. My workshop was on monitoring and evaluation and the role of governors in those. They feel fairly removed from the process. In some schools, the role of governors is viewed suspiciously by staff. It is a complex role, but, as we mentioned in our evidence, it is an essential role. Some of the issues

that I have discussed with them do not relate only to visiting schools and going into classes, because that can be seen as fairly contentious. There are ways in which governors can monitor without doing that. I have seen cases in schools where the head has samples of pupils' work and has involved governors in discussions about the quality of work and the progress that pupils are making.

[78] They can also probe the data at the end of key stage teacher assessments, which is something that I have been doing in workshops with governors. They do not have to accept what the headteacher tells them, because, once again, headteachers can be fairly liberal with the truth. Governors need to get beyond that headline information. Often, in some schools, you can have the perception of good performance, but, when the performance is compared with other similar schools, the school is not doing as well. So, it is about governors bringing that externality to the process and that challenge through a professional dialogue and asking those very simple but challenging questions about the performance of the school. So, governors can probe good achievement and can ask searching questions. However, they need to be trained to know what to ask and how to ask because they feel hesitant about making those inroads into the professional leadership team in the school.

[79] **Mr J. Jones:** Hoffwn ychwanegu at hynny drwy sôn am hyfforddiant a'r dull y gallwch ei ystyried ar gyfer hyfforddi llywodraethwyr. Pan fu'n rhoi tystiolaeth yn gynharach, soniodd Chris Jones am yr hyn y mae Caerdydd yn ei wneud. Mae'n weithredol iawn gan fod ganddo ddigon o bobl. Mae rhai awdurdodau llai yn awr yn gweithio mewn partneriaeth â'i gilydd drwy sefydliadau a phartneriaethau rhanbarthol, er enghraifft, SWAMWAC, Consortiwm De-orllewin a Chanolbarth Cymru. Mae'r consortiwm yn cynnwys Abertawe, Sir Benfro, Ceredigion ac yn y blaen. Mae hynny'n ffordd i gael hyfforddiant rhanbarthol i lywodraethwyr. Yn ogystal â hyn, fel y dywedodd Dr Chris Llewelyn, efallai y dylid meddwl am hyfforddiant arlein, a fyddai'n caniatáu i lywodraethwyr fynd ati, drwy'r cyfrifiaduron, i edrych arlein a gwneud rhyw fath o hunanasesiad i weld a fedrant fynd i'r afael â'r cwestiynau y mae angen i ni eu gofyn. Felly, mae sefydliadau sy'n gallu hybu effeithiolrwydd rôl llywodraethwyr ond, efallai, ar hyn o bryd, bod elfen o dangyflawni yn y dulliau yr ydym yn eu defnyddio i wneud hynny drwy roi gormod o bwyslais ar gael llywodraethwyr i fynychu cyfarfodydd naill ai ar ddydd Sadwrn neu ar ôl ysgol.

Mr J. Jones: I would like to add to that by talking about training and the methods that you could consider for training governors. In his evidence to you earlier, Chris Jones spoke about what Cardiff is doing. It is very active as it has sufficient people. Some smaller authorities are now working together in partnership through organisations and regional partnerships, such as the South West and Mid Wales Consortium. The consortium includes Swansea, Pembrokeshire, Ceredigion and so on. That is a way to get regional training for governors. In addition to this, as Dr Chris Llewelyn said, perhaps we should think about online training, which would allow governors, through the use of a computer, to look online and undertake some form of self-assessment to see whether they could get to grips with the questions that we need to ask. Therefore, there are organisations that can promote an effective role for governors, but, perhaps, at the moment, there is an element of underachievement with regard to the ways in which we do that through placing too great an emphasis on getting governors to attend meetings either on Saturdays or after school.

[80] Hefyd, pan fydd llywodraethwyr yn meddwl am eu rôl a bod yr awdurdodau lleol a phrifathrawon yn meddwl am yr hyn y gallant ddysgu iddynt, mae cynnwys adroddiad blynyddol Estyn yn rhoi digon o dystiolaeth o ran y cwestiynau y mae angen

Also, when governors are thinking about their role and local authorities and headteachers are thinking about what they can teach them, Estyn's annual report gives plenty of evidence on the questions that need to be asked about individual schools and also

eu gofyn ynghylch ysgolion unigol a hefyd yn genedlaethol. Er enghraifft, soniodd Mike am ystyried sut y mae ysgol arbennig yn gwneud yn genedlaethol, sut mae'n gwneud yn erbyn ysgolion eraill yn yr awdurdod lleol a, hefyd, sut y mae'r ysgol yn cymharu ag ysgolion tebyg sydd yn yr un categori prydau bwyd am ddim. Ambell waith, pan welwn fod 75 y cant yn cyrraedd y lefel ddisgwyliedig ac mae'r prifathro yn dweud, 'Yr wyf wedi cyrraedd fy nharged, yr ydym yn gwneud yn dda', pan gymharwch hynny ag ysgolion tebyg yn yr un sefyllfa economaidd a chymdeithasol, nid ydynt yn gwneud hanner cystal. Felly, nid yw'r wybodaeth honno'n gryf o fewn cyrff llywodraethwyr.

[81] Hefyd, mae Estyn, yn ei adroddiad blynyddol diwethaf, wedi cyhoeddi bod saith her i ysgolion ymateb iddynt dros y blynyddoedd nesaf. Mae'r rheini'n gwestiynau allweddol i gyrff llywodraethwyr ofyn yn unigol i'w hysgolion eu hunain. Sut ydym yn gwneud o ran dwyieithrwydd o'n cymharu ag ysgol debyg ac yn genedlaethol? Sut ydym yn gwneud yn ôl perfformiad ein disgyblion ar sail data sy'n edrych ar feincnodi? Sut ydym yn gwneud o ran cynhwysiad a pherfformiad y bechgyn yn erbyn y merched? Cyn y Nadolig, euthum i ysgol gynradd yn y gogledd lle'r oedd cadeirydd y llywodraethwyr yn ddyn proffesiynol iawn, ond nid oedd ei rôl ef yn hysbys iawn iddo, am nad oedd yn gwybod pa gwestiynau yr oedd angen eu gofyn. Felly, fy mhwynt yw bod dulliau ar gael i wneud yr hyfforddiant llawer mwy effeithiol. Mae cynnwys y hyfforddiant ar gael yn rhannol yn y cwestiynau y mae Estyn wedi eu codi yn ei adroddiad blynyddol.

[82] **Christine Chapman:** Some of these points have already been raised, but I just want to add to them, really. I was rather alarmed because, in point 13 of your report, you give a snapshot of 12 schools, of which the governing bodies of some six had failed to regularly monitor the quality of provision. That is a half of the 12 schools; it is not just a small amount. My concerns, like those of other Members, are that governors should not be passive. I think that we all have experience of different schools where headteachers call the shots—that is the relationship. The training that is needed should be done with headteachers as well, so that they realise that the governing bodies are there to scrutinise as well as to do nice things and to support the school. It is about the children's education. That is a fundamental part of it. Do you have any further points on that?

[83] Communication, too, has been a problem that I have experienced. Information is not always passed on to the governors. That is not just about training; it is actually about the

at the national level. For example, Mike mentioned looking at how a certain school is faring nationally, how it compares to other schools within the local authority and also how that school compares with similar schools in the same free school meals category. Sometimes, when we see that 75 per cent reach the expected level and the headteacher says, 'I have reached my target, we are doing well', when you compare that to similar schools in the same economic and social situation, they do not do half so well. So, that information is not strong within governing bodies.

Also, Estyn, in its most recent annual report, has announced that there are seven challenges for schools to respond to in years to come. These are key questions for governing bodies to ask individually of their own schools. How are we doing with regard to bilingualism compared to similar schools and nationally? How are we doing according to our pupils' performance as attested by data that look at benchmarking? How are we doing with regard to inclusion and boys' performance compared to the girls? Before Christmas, I was at a school in the north where the chair of governors is a very professional man, but he was not very aware of his role, simply because he did not know which questions he needed to ask. So, my point is that there are means of making the training much more effective. The content of the training is available in part in the form of the questions that Estyn has raised in its annual report.

information. It is as simple as that, really.

[84] **Mr Maguire:** Your point about information is a crucial one. In most schools, the information that a headteacher provides to the governing body is good, very thorough and detailed. However, in a couple of schools, the information is restricted, and that might be for different reasons. For example, Jeff mentioned the outcomes at the end of the key stage. I had this debate with one school, which we had put into the significant improvement category, because the chair of governors, who is very professional, gave us a bit of a hard time, and asked why they were being placed in that kind of category. He said, 'If you look at our teacher assessment, you can see that we're doing very well'. I said, 'Well, on the face of it, you are doing very well', but the headteacher had never benchmarked the information and compared his school to similar schools. This is a school where 3 per cent of the pupils had free school meals. It was in a very leafy suburb and in an affluent catchment area. I told the chair and the other governors that when we compared the school against other, similar schools in Wales, it was not doing well at all; it was in the bottom 25 per cent, the bottom quartile. That is why people like me go in, to improve the lot of pupils and to improve achievement in a school, because pupils are not achieving their full potential. I use that as an anecdotal example to illustrate the fact that at that particular school, the governors felt that they were getting enough information, when the information was okay, but not detailed enough.

[85] I will just mention another little anecdote, which reflects on what you said about challenging questions. Jeff and I work particularly in schools in the significant improvement or special measures categories, and we have found that a common thread runs through those schools. It is one of poor leadership from the headteacher and, often, from the governing body. Those governing bodies do not always challenge the headteacher enough and I have often heard it said that it is because 'he's a very nice man'. We have to respond that no doubt he is a very nice man, but he is not working effectively as a headteacher to move the school forward as he should. So, there is a feeling among governors that they do not want to challenge. They feel hesitant about challenging and, even when they do, some of the information that they get from headteachers is limited.

2.10 p.m.

[86] **Mr J. Jones:** I think that the phrase that we use is that they can be 'economical with the truth'.

[87] **Jenny Randerson:** Earlier, we talked with representatives from the WLGA about the recruitment problems of governing bodies. I would value your thoughts on the link between those governing bodies that are having recruitment problems and their performance. Is there a link or do they do well despite the fact that they may find it difficult to recruit people? It has been put to us that parent-governors are the main issue. Do you think that it would aid recruitment if people had to undertake compulsory training when they started being a governor? Would knowing that they would be trained for the job put people off or would it give them the confidence to put their name forward?

[88] **Mr J. Jones:** I think that it is a bit of both. You have to be careful not to intimidate people by including this element of assessed work. Online self-assessment is useful and may be the way forward. Governors can access that to see how well they have scored, or whatever you wish to call it, in terms of knowing what questions to ask under the various headings, such as data, bilingualism and so on. Therefore, it becomes non-threatening and they are then responsible for their own development rather than having a sword of Damocles waiting to come down on them and a situation where, if they do not pass, they are named and shamed, as it were. You want to avoid that situation because it would go against recruiting people.

[89] **Jenny Randerson:** On the first part of my question, is there a link between governing

bodies that have a problem recruiting and the poor performance that you have pointed out, or is that irrelevant?

[90] **Mr J. Jones:** Mike mentioned that he had been to a school in a leafy suburb; I had been to one before Christmas. Those two schools went into categories despite having professional chairs of governors and no problems with recruitment. So, in part, it is not related to that; it relates to, as we keep saying, knowing what critical questions you should ask in that particular context.

[91] **Huw Lewis:** What comes across strongly, as we work through this topic, is the centrality of the role of good governance in delivering good education and, when that breaks down, it pretty much makes victims of the pupils. Ultimately, they are the victims, if things go wrong. Initially, one thing that I was concerned about when I read your evidence was the wild variation in standards. You talked about 10 per cent of schools being wonderful and getting things together in terms of school governance, but at the other extreme were schools where the governing bodies failed on every count—there was no coherent governance at all. Who guards the guards here? I suppose that there are measures in which schools can be put, but I would have thought that the challenges and problems facing most schools fall in between those two extremes and do not warrant such measures, but warrant some kind of intervention to put things right and to encourage things to move in a different direction, particularly in relation to the monitoring of standards. It seems from your evidence that lots of school governing bodies do not see their role as including the monitoring of achievement, which is astonishing. What happens if that is found out?

[92] All of us, as community representatives, will have come across unhealthy relationships between certain governing bodies and certain headteachers from time to time. It is not that they were not working together, but that they were working together almost conspiratorially against the educational interests of at least some of their pupils, perhaps by not making clear all the information about achievement. In other cases, I have come across clear examples of schools that engineer their examination results by excluding borderline kids from entrance to examinations, expecting the local further education colleges to sort them out for them. These relationships are not serving the kids or the community but the vested interests of a group of professionals and amateur professionals, that is, the governors and the headteachers, who are working together to make themselves look good. What happens when Estyn goes in and sees that happening? I cannot grasp what happens aside from pushing the red button in a really bad situation—you gave an example of that. When things are veering towards poor governance, attainment is not being looked at and there is an unhealthy relationship with the headteacher, what happens? Who guards the guards? How does the Minister come into all this? How do we improve and clear up the situation?

[93] **Mr Maguire:** You will know that Estyn inspects schools on a six-yearly cycle, so we give them a good looking-at every six years and the role of the governors will be part of that inspection process. However, and I think that this is the point that you are getting at, what happens during the six years between the inspections? Things can rapidly deteriorate in a school, because of changes in staffing, especially at the top, and changes in chairs of governors. There is an instrumental role here for the local authority in the work that it does in schools. We are always surprised to find schools that we have to put into categories and we always question the local authority about what it has been doing with the school. So, if I may, I will throw that across to the role of the local authority in monitoring and evaluating the work that goes on in its schools. It should be visiting schools regularly. Most local authorities look at the data on outcomes at the end of the key stages. If a school is performing badly, we would expect authorities to get in there and challenge the school. If they do not, we will pick that up in the six-yearly cycle of inspections, but not in between, because we do not visit the schools during that period. So, I would suggest that that would be largely the role of the local authority.

[94] I will say one more thing before Jeff jumps in, which is that some local authorities that we inspect are instrumental in providing regular support to the governing bodies through the clerking system. The clerks are local authority personnel, therefore, there is a direct link. So, if the clerk identifies any particular concerns, because she or he is an employee of the local authority, that concern will be taken to the local authority at an early opportunity. In the local authorities where that is not the case, which is probably the majority in Wales, clerks would not report to local authorities and we would not pick up the issue. So, as far as your question is concerned, if the local authority is not monitoring and evaluating regularly, and if the governing body is not clerked by personnel from the local authority, it will not be picked up until Estyn visits in six years' time.

[95] **Huw Lewis:** Six years is the entire secondary career of a child, so children will have come and gone before you go back to the school.

[96] **Mr Maguire:** Yes, we would agree with that.

[97] **Mr J. Jones:** There is good news in that Estyn has a system of district inspectors, who are allocated to each local authority education service. They meet regularly, at least once a term, if not more often, with every director of education, and discuss issues that are of concern either to them or to us as the inspectorate. We receive from them a list of the schools that they may have concerns about and which the district inspector may visit.

2.20 p.m.

[98] We see that as being not fully satisfactory. We are moving towards changing that system by September 2010. This, again, would be a prime example of how to develop the role of governors. Currently, if a school goes into the category of either 'special measures' or 'significant improvement', then the Minister gets a letter as does the Assembly Member, the Member of Parliament—although many Members of Parliament may have other issues on their minds at the moment—to inform them and to keep them informed of the situation. We monitor a school that is in special measures every term. If it is in the significant improvement category, we monitor at the end of a year. If it has not made sufficient progress, we go back in 18 months' time. If it then has not moved enough, we put the school into special measures. The LEA is then required to put in additional support in order to improve things.

[99] From September 2010 onwards, with the new inspection cycle starting, there will be two additional categories to add to 'special measures' for the worst performing schools and 'significant improvement' for those who are a little bit better. The first will be a category called 'coasting schools'. We envisage that about 20 per cent of schools inspected in any one year will be in that category. It is for schools that we think are doing a so-so job, as you quite rightly pointed out, but which are not doing as well as they might and are certainly not maximising the potential of those children. These 'coasting schools'—in Welsh, *ysgolion sy'n gorffwys ar eu rhwyfau*—will be visited by Estyn at regular intervals. At the moment, we think that this will be every 12 months, although that is subject to review. An eye will be kept on them and the mediocre that are just outside those categories will be held accountable more so than is the case now. However, there will also be a fourth category for those schools that we think are not quite coasting, but which are not spot on. We will ask the LEA to keep us regularly informed, through district inspector visits, of progress made every term in relation to perhaps one or two issues in that school that were not sufficient to place it into the 'coasting school' category or the other two categories. So, from 2010, the situation will become more focused for those and the role of the governors in coasting schools will be looked at closely. Therefore, to answer your question, there are issues and we are aware of the mediocre. That was something that Dr Bill Maxwell picked up in his first period in office.

[100] **Gareth Jones:** Dyna oedd y cwestiwn olaf. Yr wyf yn ddiolchgar i Huw Lewis am godi'r pwynt hwnnw. Yr oedd yn rhywbeth a ddaeth drosodd yn glir iawn yn eich cyflwyniad i ni'r prynhawn yma. Mae'n rhoi dimensiwn hollol wahanol i ryw raddau. Lle mae diffyg cydweithio, weithiau, rhwng y llywodraethwyr a'r prifathro, mae tanberfformio. Mae hefyd elfen o risg, fel y bu ichi ddweud wrthym, Mike, i'r disgyblion yn yr ysgol. Felly, mae hwnnw yn peri pryder.

[101] Derbyniaf y bydd y gyfundrefn yn newid. Yr oeddwn yn falch iawn o glywed hynny. I ryw raddau, bydd hynny'n rhan o'n hadroddiad ni fel rhywbeth pwysig i'w ystyried. Fodd bynnag, ar hyn o bryd, pan ydych yn arolygu ysgolion ac efallai yn gweld gwendidau, yr ydych yn tynnu cynllun gweithredu ar gyfer yr ysgol. Derbyniaf, felly, fod rhai ysgolion lle yr ydych wedi tynnu sylw at y ffaith nad yw gwaith neu gyfraniad y llywodraethwyr, neu'r berthynas â hwy, mor effeithiol ag y gallent fod. Yr ydych eisoes wedi tynnu sylw at hynny. Y broblem ar hyn o bryd yw nad oes unrhyw un yn mynd i'r afael â hwnnw yn y cyfnod o chwe blynedd rhwng arolygiadau.

[102] Croesawaf y newidiadau a derbyniaf ei fod yn gam sylweddol ymlaen. Fodd bynnag, gan fod yr adroddiad yr ydym yn ymwneud ag ef yma yn adrodd yn ôl yn uniongyrchol i'r Cynulliad, ac felly i'r Gweinidog, a oes lle i'r Gweinidog ystyried rhyw fath o symudiad o'r canol, neu ryw fath o wasanaeth o'r canol, yn uniongyrchol i'r ysgolion hyn, ynteu a ydych yn hyderus y bydd y gyfundrefn sydd gennym, gyda'r Gweinidog yn y canol ond yr awdurdodau lleol ac Estyn yn cydweithio, yn sicrhau ein bod yn mynd i'r afael â'r broblem hon?

[103] **Mr J. Jones:** Yr wyf yn eithaf ffyddiog, o weld y gwaith da sy'n digwydd yn y mwyaftrif o'n hawdurdodau addysg ni, bod ganddynt yr arbenigedd sy'n angenrheidiol i wella'r sefyllfa. Yr hyn sy'n pwysu yn erbyn bod yn llawer mwy effeithiol, efallai, yw'r pwysau gwaith sydd ar bobl o'r awdurdodau lleol. Gall hynny filwrio'n erbyn bod yn llawer mwy effeithiol, ond rhywbeth sy'n ymwneud â niferoedd yw hynny. Ar y cyfryw, mae'r arbenigedd

Gareth Jones: That was the last question. I am grateful to Huw Lewis for raising that point. It was something that came across clearly in your presentation to us this afternoon. It gives a completely different dimension, to a certain extent. Where there is a lack of joint working, sometimes, between the governors and the headteacher, there is underperformance. There is also an element of risk, as you told us, Mike, to the pupils in the school. Therefore, that causes concern.

I accept that the system will change. I was very pleased to hear that. To a certain extent, that will be a part of our report as an important element to consider. However, at the moment, when you inspect schools and, perhaps, see weaknesses, you draw up an action plan for that school. I accept, therefore, that there are some schools where you have identified that the work or contribution of the governors, or the relationship with them, are not as effective as they could be. You have already drawn attention to that. The problem at present is that no-one is actually taking that up in that period of six years between inspections.

I welcome the changes and I accept that that is a significant step forward. However, as the report that we are considering here will report directly back to the Assembly, and therefore to the Minister, is there any reason for the Minister to consider some sort of move from the centre, or some sort of central service, directly for these schools; or are you confident that the system that we currently have, with the Minister at its centre but with the local authorities and Estyn collaborating, will ensure that we get to grips with this problem?

Mr J. Jones: I am quite confident, in seeing the good work that is ongoing in most of our education authorities, that they have the expertise required in order to improve the situation. The barrier to even greater efficiency, perhaps, is the huge workload on local authority staff. That can militate against even greater efficiency, but that is related to numbers for the most part. On the whole, the expertise does exist. We would welcome further resources, if they are available, to

hwnnw yn bodoli. Byddem yn croesawu rhagor o adnoddau, os ydynt ar gael, i'w rhoi i'r awdurdodau lleol i gryfhau'r gwasanaeth gwella ysgolion. Os daw hynny o'r canol, byddem yn ddiolchgar iawn.

[104] **Gareth Jones:** Dyna beth fydd aelodau'r pwyllgor yn gorfod ei ystyried, wrth gwrs, wrth wneud yr argymhellion. Mae'n faes hynod o allweddol a phwysig. Os oes rhyw fath o wendidau yn y gyfundrefn, ein lle ni yw atgoffa'r Gweinidog o'r ffaith hwnnw fel y gall y Gweinidog weithredu mor bositif ag y bo modd.

[105] **Mr J. Jones:** Pe bai'r Gweinidog yn edrych yn ofalus iawn ar y consortiwm rhanbarthol hwn a'i ystyried fel ffynhonnell, efallai, i ddatblygu rôl y llywodraethwyr, ynghyd â'r ffynonellau eraill ar-lein, a chydweithio â'r awdurdodau lleol drwy'r consortia rhanbarthol, mae'r strwythur yn barod yn ei le. Efallai mai'r elfen o ariannu y byddai angen ei ystyried.

[106] **Gareth Jones:** Defnyddiodd Huw'r gair, 'intervention', sef ein bod yn medru gwneud hynny pan fo galw amlwg i weithredu felly.

[107] Ar ran yr Aelodau, hoffwn ddiolch yn fawr iawn i'r ddau ohonoch am eich cyflwyniad, ac am y drafodaeth agored a gonest a gawsom. Derbyniwn ei fod yn faes sensitif ac anodd, mewn llawer ystyr. Serch hynny, credaf ein bod wedi cymryd cam sylweddol ymlaen heddiw ac yr ydym yn hynod ddiolchgar i chi. Diolch yn fawr iawn.

[108] Mae gennym un papur i'w nodi, sef cofnodion y cyfarfod blaenorol. Gwelaf fod pawb yn fodlon ar y cofnodion, ac felly cyhoeddaf mai dyna ddiwedd y cyfarfod. Diolch yn fawr.

give to local authorities to improve the school improvement service. If that came from the centre, we would be very grateful.

Gareth Jones: That is something that committee members will have to consider, of course, in bringing the recommendations forward. It is a crucial area. If there are some problems with the system, it is our role to remind the Minister of those facts so that the Minister can then take as positive action as possible.

Mr J. Jones: If the Minister were to look very carefully at the regional consortium and consider it as a source, perhaps, of developing the role of governors, as well as other online sources, and collaborate with the local authorities through the regional consortia, the structure is already in place. Perhaps an element of funding would need to be considered.

Gareth Jones: Huw used the word 'intervention'. We are able to intervene if there is clear need to take such action.

On behalf of the Members, I thank you very much for your presentation, and for the honest and open discussion that we have had. We accept that it is a sensitive and difficult area, in many respects. However, we have taken a significant step forward today and we are extremely grateful to you. Thank you very much.

We have one paper to note, that is, the minutes of the previous meeting. I see that everyone is content with the minutes, and I therefore declare the meeting closed. Thank you.

*Daeth y cyfarfod i ben am 2.29 p.m.
The meeting ended at 2.29 p.m.*