



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

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

**Dydd Mercher, 23 Medi 2009
Wednesday, 23 September 2009**

Cynnwys
Contents

- 4 Cyflwyniad ac Ymddiheuriadau
Introduction and Apologies
- 4 Ymchwiliad Dilynol i'r Cymorth i Bobl â Dyslecsia yng Nghymru
Follow-up Inquiry into Support for People with Dyslexia in Wales
- 22 Cynnig Trefniadol
Procedural Motion

Cofnodir y trafodion hyn yn yr iaith y llefarwyd hwy ynddi yn y pwyllgor. Yn ogystal, cynhwysir cyfieithiad Saesneg o gyfraniadau yn y Gymraeg. Mae hon yn fersiwn ddrafft o'r cofnod. Cyhoeddir fersiwn derfynol ymhen pum diwrnod gwaith.

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. This is a draft version of the record. The final version will be published within five working days.

Aelodau'r pwyllgor yn bresennol
Committee members in attendance

Christine Chapman	Llafur Labour
Jeff Cuthbert	Llafur Labour
Paul Davies	Ceidwadwyr Cymreig Welsh Conservatives
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
David Melding	Ceidwadwyr Cymreig Welsh Conservatives
Sandy Mewies	Llafur Labour
Jenny Randerson	Democratiaid Rhyddfrydol Cymru Welsh Liberal Democrats

Eraill yn bresennol
Others in attendance

Michael Davies	Cymdeithas Dyslecsia Prydain Welsh Dyslexia Project
Jane Hutt	Aelod Cynulliad, Llafur (y Gweinidog dros Blant, Addysg, Dysgu Gydol Oes a Sgiliau) Assembly Member, Labour (the Minister for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills)
Yr Athro/Professor Amanda Kirby	Cadeirydd Meddygol y Ganolfan Dyscovery sydd â Chadair mewn Anhwyldeirau Datblygu mewn Addysg Chair in Developmental Disorders in Education and Medical
Dr Kate Saunders	Director of the Dyscovery Centre Cymdeithas Dyslecsia Prydain British Dyslexia Association
Mair Watkins	Pennaeth Anghenion Addysgu Arbennig, yr Adran Plant, Addysg, Dysgu Gydol Oes a Sgiliau, Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru Head of Additional Learning Needs, the Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills, Welsh Assembly Government

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

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

*Dechreuodd y cyfarfod am 9.29 a.m.
The meeting began at 9.29 a.m.*

Cyflwyniad ac Ymddiheuriadau Introduction and Apologies

[1] **Gareth Jones:** Bore da a chroeso cynnes i gyfarfod y Pwyllgor Menter a Dysgu. Estynnaf groeso cynnes i bob un ohonoch ar ddechrau tymor newydd. Yr wyf yn dymuno'r gorau i chi, Aelodau. Fe'ch atgoffaf i ddiffodd ffonau symudol ac unrhyw ddyfais electronig arall. Ni fydd angen cyffwrdd â'r microffonau yn ystod y trafodaethau. Nid ydym yn disgwyl ymarfer tân, felly os bydd argyfwng, rhaid inni adael yr ystafell o dan gyfarwyddyd y tywysyddion. Bydd y cyfarfod yn ddwyieithog. 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.

Gareth Jones: Good morning and a warm welcome to this Enterprise and Learning Committee meeting. I extend a warm welcome to you all at the beginning of a new term and wish you all the best, Members. I remind you to switch off mobile phones and any other electronic devices. There will be no need to touch the microphones during our deliberations. We are not expecting a fire drill, so if there is an emergency, we will need to leave the room under the ushers' directions. The meeting will be bilingual. Headsets are available to hear the interpretation from Welsh to English on channel 1, and to amplify the sound on channel 0. There will be a Record of all that is said publicly.

[2] Ni ddaeth unrhyw ymddiheuriadau i law, felly nid oes neb yn dirprwyo.

We have not received any apologies, so there are no substitutions.

9.31 a.m.

Ymchwiliad Dilynol i'r Cymorth i Bobl â Dyslecsia yng Nghymru Follow-up Inquiry into Support for People with Dyslexia in Wales

[3] **Gareth Jones:** Fel cefndir, er mwyn ein hatgoffa o'r pwnc, cyhoeddwyd adroddiad y Pwyllgor Menter a Dysgu ar gymorth i bobl â dyslecsia yng Nghymru ym mis Gorffennaf 2008. Lluniwyd yr adroddiad gan grŵp bach o bedwar Aelod Cynulliad o'r pwyllgor hwn. Ni wn pam, ond Jeff Cuthbert yw'r unig un sydd yn dal i fod yn aelod o'r pwyllgor hwn. Hoffwn grybwyll hefyd fod yr ymagwedd a fabwysiadodd y grŵp yn ei ymchwiliad yn cael ei hystyried fel ffordd effeithiol a defnyddiol o gysylltu â'r gynulleidfa benodol hon. Yr oedd hefyd yn effeithiol o ran annog pobl i gyflwyno tystiolaeth mewn amgylchedd mwy anffurfiol na'r un presennol. Mae hynny'n dda o beth gan fod pobl yn fwy parod i siarad am eu profiadau.

Gareth Jones: As background, to remind us of the subject, the Enterprise and Learning Committee's report on support for people with dyslexia in Wales was published in July 2008. The report was drafted by a small group of four Assembly Members from this committee. I do not know why, but Jeff Cuthbert is the only one who remains a member of this committee. I would also like to mention that the approach adopted by the group in its inquiry is now considered to be an effective and useful way of engaging with this particular audience. It was also effective in encouraging people to submit evidence in an environment that is slightly less formal than the current one. That is good, as people were more willing to speak about their experience.

[4] Pwrpas sesiwn heddiw yw adolygu'r argymhellion yn ein hadroddiad a chraffu ar rai materion newydd sydd wedi codi dros y

The purpose of today's session is to review the recommendations in our report and to scrutinise some new matters that have arisen

flwyddyn ddiwethaf. Mae Aelodau wedi cael eu briffio, ac yr ydym yn ddiolchgar am yr briff hwnnw. Mae'n bleser gennyf groesawu cynrychiolaeth o Gymdeithas Dyslecsia Prydain. Estynnaf groeso cynnes i Dr Kate Saunders, sy'n cynrychioli'r gymdeithas. Mae'r gymdeithas wedi cyflwyno papur i ni, sef papur 1. Yr ydym eisoes wedi derbyn y dystiolaeth ysgrifenedig ac wedi cael cyfle i'w darllen. Yr ydym yn ddiolchgar i chi, Dr Saunders, am hynny.

[5] Gyda Dr Kate Saunders, ar ran Prosiect Dyslecsia Cymru, mae Michael Davies. Croeso cynnes i chi, Michael. Deallaf eich bod wedi codi'n gynnar iawn i fod gyda ni'r bore yma. Yr ydym yn ddiolchgar iawn i chi am hynny. Credaf y gall nifer ohonom uniaethu â'r hyn yr ydych wedi'i wneud y bore yma. Diolch i chi hefyd am eich papur, y dystiolaeth ysgrifenedig yr ydych wedi ei chyflwyno i Aelodau. A allwch roi cyflwyniad o ryw bum munud ac yna cawn gyfle, fel Aelodau, i ofyn rhai cwestiynau i chi? Croeso a drosodd i chi.

[6] **Dr Saunders:** Thank you for inviting me here today; I am very pleased to be here. I am the education and policy director for the British Dyslexia Association. We have been very involved with drawing up, supplying information for and implementing the Rose review recommendations from the English Government. The Rose report came out recently. In England, £10 million has been allocated for the next two years to train 4,000 additional specialist teachers at either approved teacher status or associate membership of the British Dyslexia Association level. Approved teacher status is level 5 and AMBDA is a level 7 course. The overall aim is to have one teacher at AMBDA level who would be in charge of a cluster of perhaps five schools. AMBDA level teachers are qualified to undertake diagnostic assessments for dyslexia. They would also have a role in taking on some of the assessment work that can currently fall to educational psychologists. So, they would have a role of identifying, screening and assessing as well as supporting teachers in schools, helping to plan programmes for the children and monitoring the progress of those children. They would work with teaching assistants who might be delivering the programmes and give them informal training on how to use different resources. If a child were not making progress, they would also have a responsibility to change the programme so that the child did make progress. There is also an emphasis in the Rose review, of which you may be aware, on early identification. That is generally accepted to be very important in this field, because the earlier the identification, the earlier the input and the better the prognosis for the child. I will now hand over to Michael to make an introduction. I will be happy to answer your questions after that.

[7] **Mr Davies:** Mae Prosiect Dyslecsia Cymru yn falch bod gan y pwyllgor rapporteur a'r Gweinidog y weledigaeth i weld bod angen darpariaeth briodol yng Nghymru a fydd yn diwallu gofynion yr unigolion drwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg a'r Saesneg, sydd yn hollbwysig. Ar hyn o bryd, mae prinder adnoddau cyfrwng Cymraeg o

over the last year. Members have been briefed, for which we are grateful. It is my pleasure to welcome a representative from the British Dyslexia Association. I extend a warm welcome to Dr Kate Saunders, who is representing the association. The association has submitted a paper to us, namely paper 1. We have already received the written evidence and have had an opportunity to read it. We are grateful to you, Dr Saunders, for that.

With Dr Kate Saunders, on behalf of the Welsh Dyslexia Project, is Michael Davies. I extend a warm welcome to you, Michael. I understand that you had to get up very early to be with us this morning. We are grateful to you for that. I believe that a number of us can empathise with what you have done this morning. Thank you also for your paper, the written evidence that you have submitted to Members. Could you give an introduction of around five minutes and then Members will have the opportunity to ask you some questions? Welcome and over to you.

Mr Davies: The Welsh Dyslexia Project is pleased that the rapporteur committee and the Minister have the vision to see that appropriate provision is needed in Wales that will meet the needs of individuals through the media of English and Welsh, which is crucial. At the moment, there is a lack of resources through the medium of Welsh for

ran sgrinio ac o ran cefnogi'r plant hynny ar ôl iddynt gael eu sgrinio. Mae cyrsiau ar gael i hyfforddi athrawon i fod yn athrawon anghenion arbennig trwyddedig, ond nid oes dim penodol ar gyfer dyslecsia. Felly, hoffwn weld cwrs yn cael ei sefydlu i hyfforddi athrawon i fod yn arbenigwyr ar ddyslecsia yn unig. Os ydym am weld athrawon dyslecsig trwyddedig yn ein hysgolion, mae angen mwy na'r cwrs anghenion arbennig a ariennir gan y Cynulliad ar hyn o bryd.

screening and supporting those children once they have been screened. There are courses available to train teachers to be licensed special educational needs teachers, but there is no specific course on dyslexia. Therefore, I would like to see a course being established to train teachers to become specialists exclusively in dyslexia. If we want to see licensed dyslexia teachers in our schools, we need more than the special educational needs course that is currently funded by the Assembly.

[8] Mae hefyd angen i'r cyrsiau hyn fod drwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg ac i edrych ar sefyllfa'r iaith Gymraeg a'r gwahaniaethau rhwng y Gymraeg a'r Saesneg. Yr ydym wedi derbyn nifer o lythyrau gan rieni yn dweud fod rhai awdurdodau yn darparu gwasanaeth cyfrwng Cymraeg ac eraill nad ydynt yn gwneud hynny. Os yw plant yn cael eu haddysgu yn y sector Cymraeg ac yn cael eu nodi'n ddyslecsig, mae rhai ysgolion a swyddogion hyd yn oed yn argymhell y dylid eu symud i ysgolion cyfrwng Saesneg. Felly, mae gofyn edrych ar hynny hefyd.

These courses also need to be through the medium of Welsh and to look at the position of the Welsh language and the differences between English and Welsh. We have received many letters from parents stating that some authorities provide a Welsh-medium service, while others do not. If children receive education through the medium of Welsh and are identified as being dyslexic, some schools and officials will even suggest that they are moved to English-medium schools. So, we also need to look at that.

[9] Ar sgrinio, caiff gwaith arloesol ei wneud ar hyn o bryd gan awdurdod lleol Pen-y-bont ar Ogwr i ddatblygu prawf ar gyfer y cyfnod sylfaen. Cafodd ei gyfieithu i'r Gymraeg, ond ni sefydlwyd normau safonol. Nid ydym yn siŵr a oes cyllid ar gael ar hyn o bryd i alluogi Angela Fawcett a'i thîm, sy'n gweithio ar y prawf hwn, i barhau i sefydlu normau. Oni sefydlir normau, ni fydd prawf ar gael yn y Gymraeg. Maent hefyd yn barod i ddatblygu prawf ar gyfer plant rhwng 6 ac 11 oed, a'r gost ar gyfer hwnnw yw £12,500, sy'n swm bach er mwyn darparu prawf cyfrwng Cymraeg ar gyfer cyfnod allweddol 2. Felly, mae angen arian ar gyfer hwnnw hefyd.

On screening, innovative work is being undertaken at the moment by Bridgend local authority to develop a test for the foundation phase. That has been translated into Welsh, but no standard norms have been established. We are not sure whether funding is currently available to enable Angela Fawcett and her team, who are working on this test, to continue to establish norms. If those norms are not established, then a test will not be available in Welsh. They are also prepared to develop a test for children aged between 6 and 11, at a cost of £12,500, which is a small amount to provide a Welsh-medium test for key stage 2. So, we also need money for that.

[10] **Gareth Jones:** Diolch am y sylwadau agoriadol hynny. Trown yn awr at gwestiynau'r Aelodau.

Gareth Jones: Thank you for those opening points. We will now turn to Members' questions.

[11] **Jeff Cuthbert:** Thank you for your written papers and for your presentations. As the Chair said, I am the only surviving member, from this committee's membership, of the dyslexia rapporteur group. I remember our work, which was done very enthusiastically and with a good degree of cross-party consensus, which characterised the outcomes of that work.

9.40 a.m.

[12] My mother has just moved into a residential home, and you may wonder why on earth I mention that. My two brothers and I were in the process of clearing out the house. I am dyslexic and although I have some coping skills to deal with it now, when I was a young lad, it was a problem. It is amazing what mothers keep. She has kept my school reports from when I was in primary school. There is a report for the autumn term, 1957.

[13] **David Melding:** You should plead the fifth amendment. [*Laughter.*]

[14] **Jeff Cuthbert:** ‘Jeffrey has done some good work. Much of his work in class is spoilt by carelessness.’

[15] The reports say that I was a quite a well behaved boy—a standard of behaviour that I have maintained up until the present time. For the Christmas term, 1958, it says:

[16] ‘Fairly good progress has been made. He needs to work harder at his spelling’.

[17] At spelling, I achieved six out of 20. Finally, for the summer term, 1959, it says that Jeffrey has worked well and deserves his position—I am very good at mathematics—however, he needs to work harder at spelling. We can all misspell—of course we can—but dyslexia is more than that: it is about not being able to see the word or being able to see it and spell it one day, but not the next day. That was the dim and distant past.

[18] As for now, Michael referred to the foundation phase and the test for Welsh. If I were that age again now, I would be looking forward to receiving my primary education under the foundation phase. I appreciate the issue about the test and that we are still in the early stages, but I would like to know if you feel that, in general, the different approach to providing learning for our youngest children through structured play is likely to assist in the development of better support for dyslexia and other additional learning needs.

[19] **Dr Saunders:** I am not sure that I know enough about what is done here in the foundation years to answer that question fully enough. The implication, from what you have said, is that it is structured play that is multisensory. In general terms, if dyslexics are having lots of activities that are leading them to develop sequencing, sound discrimination, visual discrimination, motor co-ordination, language and comprehension skills, that is good because all those are necessary prerequisites for literacy acquisition. If those are part of what is being done, that would be a positive thing.

[20] Moving on from that, what is absolutely necessary for dyslexics is good, structured phonics teaching and good teaching in rules and patterns because they do not remember visually the look of a word very often. Sometimes they have difficulty hearing the differences between sounds, so phonological skills can be very difficult for them to build up. So, there is a need for good-quality classroom teaching that is well structured and phonics based. Also, for those children who cannot keep up with the pace of delivery in a normal classroom, there should be intervention from the very early years—we would say that there should be even from year 1. I know that there is a recommendation for intervention to be in place at Christmas in year 2, and it is great that there is such a goalpost, however if a child has severe difficulties in year 1, there should be intervention available for that child and there should be specialists available who will be able to say, ‘Yes, this child has a need and we need to do something different for them’. In year 1, they might go into a booster group. Perhaps there would be a group of four children with someone doing a good phonics programme with them. They might do some sound and letter correspondence and those sorts of things. It may be that for perhaps two out of four of those children, that will be enough—they will catch up and go back into the mainstream. That will have been their catch up. Probably, for two out of four of that booster group, there will be a need for ongoing one-to-one specialist provision. This is where we need good, specialist trained teachers who can tell the difference and do what is

appropriate for the child at the point of need.

[21] **Mr Davies:** Credaf y bydd y cyfnod sylfaen yn helpu'r plant hyn, yn enwedig i ddeall iaith a sefydlu iaith yn y dosbarth. Fel dywedodd Dr Saunders, mae angen rhywun gydag arbenigedd yn y dosbarth neu'r adran i sicrhau bod plant â phroblemau yn cael eu canfod yn gynnar. Mae dechrau blwyddyn 2 braidd yn hwyr efallai os oes gan blant broblemau, ond yr argymhelliad yw, os yw plant yn methu darllen neu'n cael anawsterau gyda darllen ar ddechrau blwyddyn 2, fod ymyrraeth yn cael ei wneud dros y tymor. Felly, dylent wella erbyn hynny.

Mr Davies: I think that the foundation phase will help these children, especially to understand language and to establish language in the classroom. As Dr Saunders said, someone with expertise is needed in the classroom or the department to ensure that children who have problems are identified early on. The start of year 2 is perhaps rather late if children do have problems, but the recommendation is that, if children cannot read or they struggle with their reading by the start of year 2, they should receive intervention over the course of the term. So, they should improve by then.

[22] **Gareth Jones:** Jeff, as the sole survivor, do you want to come back on any of the points?

[23] **Jeff Cuthbert:** Not specifically, except to say that the foundation phase is such a major change to how we deliver education that I assume that you will closely monitor its developments to contribute ideas as to how, in this case, dyslexia can be diagnosed as early as possible and interventions put in place.

[24] **Paul Davies:** As you are aware, the Welsh Assembly Government is spending £118,000 over the next two years on a benchmarking exercise to map out the current provision of services for dyslexia. Do you agree with this approach, or would it have been more sensible to have spent this money on the front line, on delivering support for people with dyslexia?

[25] Appropriate training for staff, which you touched on, is essential in supporting people who have dyslexia. I understand that e-learning courses are available to teachers and support staff, and for teachers who are seeking accreditation, I understand that there is a bilingual course at postgraduate level 6. From what you have already said, you feel that sufficient training is not available at the moment. Have you seen any improvement in the levels of training for education professionals since the committee report was published in July 2008? Do you feel that progress has been made on increasing the number of specialist dyslexia teachers in schools?

[26] **Mr Davies:** O ran hyfforddiant, credaf mai dim ond ychydig dros 50 o athrawon sydd wedi penderfynu dilyn y cwrs y mae'r Cynulliad yn ei ariannu, sy'n nifer fach iawn. Felly, o holl ysgolion Cymru, efallai bod cyn lleied ag 1 y cant yn arbenigo mewn anghenion arbennig.

Mr Davies: As far as training is concerned, I think that only a little over 50 teachers have decided to follow the Assembly Government-funded course, which is a very small number. So, of all the schools in Wales, perhaps as few as 1 per cent specialises in special needs.

[27] Yr ydym wedi cael trafodaeth gyda swyddogion Coleg Prifysgol y Drindod, ac maent barod i gydweithio gyda ni ar brosiect er mwyn i ni gael mewnbyn i ddarlithoedd y cyrsiau hyfforddi athrawon, oherwydd nid oes ganddynt arbenigedd—ac maent yn fodlon cyfaddef hynny—a chreu cyrsiau e-

We have been in discussion with officials from Trinity University College, and they are willing to work with us on a project so that we can have an input to the teacher training course lectures, because they do not have the expertise—as they readily admit—and to establish e-learning courses. With provision

ddysgu. Gyda darpariaeth Cymru mor wasgaredig, mae'r athrawon a'r cynorthwywyr dosbarth yn cael anhawster i deithio o'r gogledd i'r de i gymryd rhan mewn cyrsiau, ac mae'r gost i'w hystyried hefyd. Cyhyd ag y gwyddom, dim ond athrawon sy'n gallu mynd ar y cyrsiau achrededig y mae'r Cynulliad wedi'u sefydlu; nid ydynt ar gael i athrawon nad ydynt mewn swydd neu'r rhai sy'n gwneud gwaith cyflenwi. Nid ydynt ychwaith ar gael i gynorthwywyr dosbarth, ac mae angen rhywbeth i'w helpu hwythau hefyd, oherwydd maent yn gweithio'n galed i gefnogi'r plant hyn yn y dosbarth.

[28] **Gareth Jones:** Paul, a ydych yn iawn gyda hynny? Gwelaf eich bod. Trof yn awr at Nerys Evans.

[29] **Nerys Evans:** Diolch yn fawr am eich tystiolaeth. Mae tri chwestiwn penodol gennyf. Mae'r cyntaf i Prosiect Dyslecsia Cymru. Yn eich papur, yr ydych yn sôn am broblemau ym myd addysg Gymraeg, ac yn benodol yr amserlen a'r ffaith bod y cyfrifoldeb yn awr wedi ei drosglwyddo i adran yr iaith yn yr Adran Plant, Addysg, Dysgu Gydol Oes a Sgiliau yn hytrach na bod o dan oruchwyliaeth grŵp penodol. A allwch amlinellu rhai o'r problemau a beth y mae hynny'n ei olygu i blant dyslecsig a addysgir drwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg? Hefyd, beth yw'ch dealltwriaeth chi o rôl y Llywodraeth i sicrhau bod digon o staff yn adrannau addysg yr awdurdodau lleol? Mae tipyn o waith achosion wedi dod i mewn ataf o'm rhanbarth o ran prinder y staff Cymraeg eu hiaith sy'n deall addysg Gymraeg wrth ddelio â'r materion hyn. A allwch amlinellu'n fras y problemau hynny?

9.50 a.m.

[30] Mae'r ail gwestiwn i'r ddau ohonoch. Yr ydych yn sôn yn eich papur nad yw'r grŵp allanol wedi cael unrhyw fewnbwn i'r trafodaethau ar sut y gall Llywodraeth y Cynulliad ymateb i argymhellion y pwyllgor hwn. Beth yw effaith hyn yn eich tyb chi? Beth yw eich dealltwriaeth chi o rôl y grŵp allanol hwn, ac a gredwch y gallai'r grŵp fod wedi ychwanegu at waith y Llywodraeth wrth ymateb i argymhellion y pwyllgor?

in Wales being so dispersed, teachers and classroom assistants find it difficult to travel from the north to the south to take part in courses, and the cost is another consideration. As far as we know, only teachers are allowed to attend the accredited courses that the Assembly has established; they are not open to teachers who are not serving teachers or to supply teachers. Nor are they open to classroom assistants, and they also need something to help them, because they work hard to support these children in the classroom.

Gareth Jones: Paul, are you all right with that? I see that you are. I turn now to Nerys Evans.

Nerys Evans: Thank you very much for your evidence. I have three specific questions. The first is to the Welsh Dyslexia Project. In your paper, you mention the problems in Welsh-medium education, particularly with the timetable and the fact that responsibility has been transferred to the language section of the Department of Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills rather than coming under the supervision of a specific group. Can you outline some of the problems and what that means for dyslexic children who are educated in the Welsh medium? Also, what is your understanding of the Government's role in ensuring that local authorities' education departments are staffed adequately? I get quite a lot of case work from my region about the dearth of Welsh-speaking staff who understand Welsh-medium education when dealing with these matters. Can you broadly outline those problems?

The second question is to both of you. You state in your paper that the external group has not had any input to the discussions on the Assembly Government's response to this committee's recommendations. What has been the impact of this, in your view? What is your understanding of the role of this external group, and do you believe that this group could have added to the Government's response to the committee's

recommendations?

[31] Yn olaf, o ran cyllid, yr ydych yn sôn am y £10 miliwn sy'n mynd i Loegr yn sgîl adroddiad Rose. Sut, yn eich barn chi, y mae hynny'n cymharu â buddsoddiad Llywodraeth y Cynulliad yng ngwasanaethau dyslecsia Cymru?

Finally, on funding, you mention the £10 million going to England as a result of the Rose report. In your opinion, how does that compare with the Assembly Government's investment in dyslexia services in Wales?

[32] **Mr Davies:** Yn gyntaf, yr wyf yn dal i fod yn ansicr o ran yr hyn sy'n digwydd i anghenion arbennig a dyslecsia yng Nghymru. Mae grŵp rapporteur wedi'i sefydlu ac y mae gwaith yn mynd rhagddo ar hyn o bryd i edrych ar y ddarpariaeth yng Nghymru. Os edrychwn ar yr adolygiad o addysg Gymraeg, gwelwn fod amserlen gwbl wahanol o safbwynt anghenion arbennig—mae dwy flynedd o wahaniaeth. Felly, a yw'r ffaith y bydd anghenion arbennig cyfrwng Cymraeg ddwy flynedd yn hwyrach yn golygu na fydd unrhyw un yn edrych ar ddyslecsia a'r iaith Gymraeg, nac unrhyw beth yn digwydd yn y maes, tan y ddwy flynedd ar ôl hynny? Nid ydym wedi cael esboniad o hynny oddi wrth unrhyw un hyd yma.

Mr Davies: First, I am still uncertain regarding the situation with special needs and dyslexia in Wales. A rapporteur group has been established and work is currently being undertaken to look at the provision in Wales. If we look at the review of Welsh-medium education, we see that there is a totally different timetable as far as special needs are concerned—there is a two-year difference. Therefore, does the fact that there is a two-year delay in Welsh-medium special needs mean that no-one will be looking at, or nothing will happen with, dyslexia and Welsh-medium provision for another two years? So far, we have had no explanation on that.

[33] O safbwynt yr ail gwestiwn yr ydym ar ddeall bod y grŵp allanol Seisnig wedi'i ddiddymu nes bod adroddiad y grŵp arbenigol o academyddion yn cyflwyno diffiniad, ac mai ar ôl hynny y bydd y grŵp hwnnw'n cyfarfod. Yr hyn sy'n achosi'r pryder mwyaf inni yw y bydd y grŵp allanol cyfrwng Cymraeg, a oedd yn gweithio ar y mater o gydnabod angen, wedi'i ddiddymu'n llwyr. Nid yw'r grŵp hwnnw'n bodoli mwyach. Yr ydym ar ddeall bod y cyfrifoldeb am hynny bellach wedi'i drosglwyddo i uned iaith y Cynulliad. Hoffem weld athrawon profiadol, sy'n arbenigo mewn dyslecsia, yn cael eu cynnwys yn rhai o'r grwpiau allanol hyn i sicrhau y gall rhywun sy'n gweithio gyda phlant yn y dosbarth ddangos eu proffesiynoldeb a'u deallusrwydd yn y maes hwn.

Regarding the second question we understand that the English external group has been suspended until the expert group of academics comes up with a definition, and that the group will not meet until after that. Of greatest concern to us is the fact that the Welsh-medium external group, which worked on identifying need, has been abolished. The group no longer exists. We understand that the responsibility for that has now been transferred to the Assembly Government's Welsh language unit. I would like to see experienced teachers, who specialise in dyslexia, being included in some of these external groups so that those who work with children in the classroom can show their professionalism and intelligence in this field.

[34] O safbwynt cyllid, yr wyf ar ddeall, o ddarllen un o'r llythyron a gawsom, mai £2 filiwn sydd ar gael yng Nghymru ar gyfer dyslecsia, ond bod £118,000 wedi'i glustnodi ar gyfer gwaith o edrych ar lenyddiaeth a diffinio dyslecsia yng Nghymru. Efallai y byddai'n well petai'r arian hwnnw wedi'i

On funding, I understand, having read one of the letters that we received, that £2 million is available in Wales for dyslexia, but that £118,000 is ring-fenced for looking at literature and defining dyslexia in Wales. Perhaps it would have been better to ring-fence that money to train teachers and

glustnodi ar gyfer hyfforddi athrawon a chynorthwywyr dosbarth, ac i ddatblygu profion sgrinio fel bod rhywbeth yn digwydd yn y dosbarth a bod plant yn gallu cael help o'r dechrau heb orfod aros am ddwy flynedd arall tan i adroddiad y grŵp arbenigol hwn, a'r diffiniad, gael eu cyflwyno.

classroom support assistants, and to develop screening tests so that something can be done in the classroom and that children are able to receive help from the outset without having to wait another two years until the report of this specialist group, and the definition, are submitted.

[35] **Gareth Jones:** Diolch yn fawr. A ydych yn fodlon ar hynny, Nerys?

Gareth Jones: Thank you. Are you content with that response, Nerys?

[36] **Nerys Evans:** Ydwyf.

Nerys Evans: Yes.

[37] **Gareth Jones:** Trof yn awr, felly, at Jenny Randerson.

Gareth Jones: Therefore, I now turn to Jenny Randerson.

[38] **Jenny Randerson:** In addressing you both, I start with the reference just made to the £118,000. I was totally amazed to read that £118,000 was being spent on a literature review. In your view, as experts in the field and people who are absolutely immersed in this, do we not already have a definition of dyslexia, and is it a field that is so fresh that we need to spend large amounts of money researching it?

[39] The second question, which is directed to you both, is in relation to finance. Dr Saunders referred to the £10 million over two years in England. Does that give you sufficient time to work in the field and to plan for the future, or do you need more security of funding? I would be interested in your view on the financial position in Wales, Michael, because, time and again, charities, experts and organisations working in the field, as you do, come to us and say that there is not enough security of funding. Do you believe that it is realistic to plan much further ahead on funding?

[40] My final point is that I was concerned, Michael, about your evidence that many local authorities do not have a Welsh-language service. Of the 22 local authorities, how many do not have a Welsh-language service? Am I right in making the obvious assumption, which is that those that do not have a Welsh-language service will be in those parts of Wales that are overwhelmingly English speaking? I may be wrong in that assumption; you can explain that to me. The key question is whether any local authorities that currently have a service provide that service by co-operating and co-ordinating with other, nearby local authorities. It seems that, in some areas, the demand for the service in the Welsh language may be relatively low and that is why it does not exist; therefore, co-operation across local authorities will be the answer to the problem.

[41] **Dr Saunders:** To start with the first two of those points, with regards to the definition of dyslexia, several are already in existence. Opinions vary. Dyslexia represents a range of difficulties. However, for practitioners, there is a common understanding of what that range is. On the need for another literature review, we have an extensive review of the international research on intervention that was done as part of the build-up to the Rose review by Chris Singleton. We also have Greg Brooks's 'What Works for Children with Literacy Difficulties?', an extensive review of intervention programmes, how they are used in schools and what data exist to show their impact. It is a helpful reference for teachers. Therefore, the need for further review seems to me unclear.

[42] To throw in something about training in Wales, you have some very good practice on dyslexia teaching in Wales. We have worked with a number of authorities on the dyslexia-friendly schools project for a number of years. There are some well-trained, excellent practitioners who are doing good work. You have three courses in Wales that are accredited at

Associate Membership of the British Dyslexia Association level for teacher training. You have six that are accredited at approved teacher status level for dyslexia specialist teacher training and four that are accredited at accredited learning support assistant level for dyslexia-specific training. In comparison with the situation in England, you have quite a few good course providers. I absolutely take the point that there is not enough provision for dyslexia-specific teacher training in Welsh, but those courses are accredited by the British Dyslexia Association and are well run, well monitored courses. The difficulty is that school staff and teachers cannot afford to go on them. The current situation around the Rose review is that £10 million is largely earmarked for paying for teachers to go on specialist courses, so that the Government is funding those places.

[43] **Mr Davies:** We also agree that there is a good working definition of dyslexia that is useful for practitioners working in the field, which is endorsed by the BDA, and we fully accept that definition. So, I think that the £118,000 would have been better spent on other ways of addressing the difficulties faced by schoolchildren and schools.

10.00 a.m.

[44] **Jenny Randerson:** I also asked about the local authority provision.

[45] **Mr Davies:** There are quite a number of local authorities in Wales—I am not sure whether I should name authorities—where some of the officers make recommendations that children should move from Welsh-medium schools to English-medium schools, and we have that in writing from parents. There are other cases where children have been screened and found to be dyslexic and are in a Welsh-medium stream in primary school where the local education authority has decided that children in the English-medium stream get an hour of support every week, while children in the Welsh unit get 30 minutes of Welsh support and 30 minutes of English support. I would have thought that the Welsh-medium children need twice as much support—they need an hour in English and an hour in Welsh. Quite a number of authorities do that, and quite a number of them have different exit criteria as well. If you are dyslexic, you are dyslexic for life—it does not just vanish when you reach reading age, which is eight and a half years old to nine and a half years old.

[46] **Gareth Jones:** We are running out of time, but Nerys wants to come back on a specific point, and I will then turn to Christine for the last question.

[47] **Nerys Evans:** On that point, following on from Jenny's question, it is fair to say that the lack of services for dyslexic children through the medium of Welsh is not confined to non-Welsh speaking areas. I will not name any names, but in the region that I represent, even in counties where more than 50 per cent of the population speaks Welsh, the services simply are not there. Do you agree that the problem is not just confined to the traditional English-speaking areas?

[48] **Mr Davies:** Yes. The final question was about our service in Wales. We cover the whole of Wales, and we provide advice and support to parents, teachers, and schools and we run courses and various things. We depend on funding from the Big Lottery Fund. For some reason, we are not classified as an education organisation by the National Assembly—we come under the voluntary sector. However, I assume that the BDA, as in England, comes under education because it is funded by the Department for Children, Schools and Families, and we receive some money from it.

[49] **Dr Saunders:** We are not totally funded by it. We receive some allocation from it for the helpline under the Rose review.

[50] **Mr Davies:** We do not get any money at all from the National Assembly for the

service that we provide.

[51] **Christine Chapman:** Can you say something about the role of parents and whether or not the Welsh Assembly Government is putting in enough resources or interventions to support parents? In your report there is mention of the helpline, but I am concerned that some parents may not feel that they had good experiences at school, so they may not engage as well as other parents with teachers in schools if their son or daughter has dyslexia. If the dyslexia is undiagnosed, it can lead to disruptive behaviour and there is no end to the spiral of underachievement. Should more work be done with parents to engage those parents who need it most?

[52] **Dr Saunders:** Working with parents in a positive way is a very important part of what we would advocate within the dyslexia field. For example, within our dyslexia-friendly schools scheme, working in a positive way with parents and pupils is a quarter of the scheme, so schools have to show evidence that they are doing that and meeting certain criteria in the way that they are doing that. A helpline manned during the day would be a very positive step, and there needs to be something that is Welsh-based and in the Welsh language as well as in English.

[53] You are right that quite often there is a genetic pattern, whereby parents have had dyslexia difficulties or someone in the family has had dyslexia difficulties. They may have a resistance to the education system and to engaging with teachers and with schools. In a way, being able to pick up the phone to speak to someone is not so daunting a thing for them to do.

[54] So, yes, there are many things that can be done to help parents. Ideally, having local groups to support parents is a very good idea so that they can have drop-in sessions. The British Dyslexia Association encourages local groups, which are manned generally by volunteers, who are very often parents who have an interest in the topic. These groups hold meetings in which they get invited speakers along and they often have an informal befriender type of service for parents.

[55] **Gareth Jones:** On behalf of all the Members here this morning, I thank you both very much. We appreciate that you have presented to us a very balanced account. You certainly highlighted the good practice and the certain weaknesses pertaining to this provision across Wales. The role of the committee and its members is to highlight those to the Minister, and I hope that we will get greater clarity and unity of purpose, which is needed in this very challenging area. However, there are organisational aspects that I think we could easily improve to get on with the business.

[56] **Gareth Jones:** Diolch yn fawr i chi am eich amser.

Gareth Jones: Thank you very much for your time.

[57] Trown yn awr at ail ran y sesiwn graffu hon sy'n ymwneud â'r ymchwiliad dilynol i'r cymorth i bobl â dyslecsia yng Nghymru. Mae'n bleser ar ran y pwyllgor i groesawu'r Gweinidog dros Blant, Addysg, Dysgu Gydol Oes a Sgiliau, Jane Hutt. Estynnaf groeso hefyd i Mair Watkins, sy'n bennaeth anghenion addysgu arbennig yn yr Adran Plant, Addysg, Dysgu Gydol Oes a Sgiliau, i'r Athro Amanda Kirby, sy'n gadeirydd meddygol y Ganolfan Dyscovery a sydd â chadair mewn anhwylderau datblygu mewn addysg. Croeso cynnes i chi i gyd.

We now turn to the second part of this scrutiny session, which relates to the follow-up inquiry into support for people with dyslexia in Wales. It is my pleasure on behalf of the committee to welcome the Minister for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills, Jane Hutt. I also welcome Mair Watkins, who is the head of additional learning needs in the Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills, and Professor Amanda Kirby, who is medical director of the Discovery Centre and who has a chair in developmental disorders in

education. A warm welcome to you all.

[58] Diolchaf i chi, Weinidog, am y papur yr ydych wedi ei gyflwyno, sy'n egluro'r math o ddilyniant sydd wedi bod o du'r Llywodraeth. Mae hwnnw wedi cael ei ddosbarthu i'r Aelodau. Yn unol â'r drefn sy'n gyfarwydd i chi, gofynnaf i chi wneud cyflwyniad o ryw bum munud ar rai o'r prif bwyntiau ac ynghylch fel yr ydych yn gweld y sefyllfa, ac yna cawn gyfle fel Aelodau i ofyn cwestiynau.

I thank you, Minister, for the paper that you have submitted to us, which explains the type of follow-up that there has been from the Government. That has been disseminated to the Members. In line with the procedure that you are familiar with, I ask you to make a brief presentation of around five minutes on the main points and on how you see the situation, and then we, as Members, will have an opportunity to ask questions.

[59] **Y Gweinidog dros Blant, Addysg, Dysgu Gydol Oes a Sgiliau (Jane Hutt):** Diolch yn fawr, Gadeirydd.

The Minister for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills (Jane Hutt): Thank you very much, Chair.

[60] I am delighted to have the opportunity to provide not only the update that I gave you in writing, but to elaborate on that this morning. I am delighted that Professor Amanda Kirby has joined me and Mair Watkins, because Amanda is taking a key role in implementing the recommendations, particularly in relation to the literature review and the benchmarking exercise. I will bring in Amanda in response to any questions, as well as Mair. Following the launch—it is unbelievable; it was last October—I hope that you will have seen that a lot of work has been done to implement the recommendations of the committee's valuable report.

10.10 a.m.

[61] As I identified in my written submission, having the small task group of experts from across Wales in the field of specific learning difficulties has helped and guided me and my officials. I also identified that I have made funding available over the next two years for the literature review on dyslexia, as well as the benchmarking exercise. Importantly, as I said in an early response to the report, we must ensure that when we look at definitions we look across the whole ability range, and the variations in the severity of learning difficulties. We are obviously looking at dyslexia, but also dyscalculia and dyspraxia, and it is important to make those connections; that is an area where Amanda can guide us, given her expertise. The review will also enable us to consider current definitions of dyslexia, identify features, look at the screening assessment tools that are available, and map out the current provision of services for dyslexia and specific learning difficulties. That will obviously mean looking at provision across secondary mainstream schools and pupil referral units as well as our mainstream primary schools, where early identification is crucial.

[62] In agreeing to the recommendations, I have asked the group to review the Fast ForWord products as recommended by the committee, and to look at that in the context of other vehicles and methods, and the availability of an evidence base for this. Again, that is something that we can touch on later. We are also into the first year of assessing whether our new guidance on the PLASC—the pupil-level annual school census—is robust, and the literature review of the benchmarking will enable us to see whether that needs to be amended and developed in any way.

[63] I have responded to the recommendations about initial teacher training, and you also know that I launched the bilingual e-learning course for special educational needs last year. I am particularly looking at opportunities for the continuing professional development of teachers and teaching staff. I am also looking at the impact of our statutory reform programme, and the four pilot projects on statementing and the role of special educational needs co-ordinators. We are now working with eight local authorities on the final details of

the pilot schemes, and I know that you are taking evidence from the charities and organisations at the forefront of supporting parents and children, including Dyslexia Action, for example. I am also considering a way forward for training teachers, particularly at a cluster level, and looking at provision across local schools. This goes back to the fact that your committee report was wide-ranging and robust, and as regards my commitment as Minister I hope that you will see that I am now seeking to deliver.

[64] **Gareth Jones:** Thank you, Minister. We appreciate having Amanda with us to look specifically at that area of the definition. I invite Jenny Randerson to ask the first question.

[65] **Jenny Randerson:** When I read the paper I was surprised that £118,000 was necessary for a literature review, so I asked a question of the two organisations working with dyslexia, who came to committee earlier. I asked whether there was a settled definition of dyslexia and whether the literature was uncertain on that point. They agreed that there was a clear definition of dyslexia among practitioners, although there are different ranges of dyslexia, and they said that there was a clear understanding of what dyslexia is among practitioners and that, as regards a literature review, an exhaustive definition has already been drawn up for the Rose review. Therefore, Minister, I would like an explanation as to why we are finding it necessary to do it again in Wales. My motivation for this is really that, given that there is such a funding problem at the moment, would it not be better to put the money into improving front-line services?

[66] Another thing we were told this morning is that we have a range of excellent training courses here in Wales, not just for teachers, but for others working in education. The problem is that schools cannot afford to send people on courses. In England, £10 million has been allocated, much of which will be spent on sending teachers on training courses. Minister, you have just talked about training at a cluster level. How much money are you planning to allocate to training, and will it simply be for training in schools, or are you looking at people going on the much more specialised longer courses available?

[67] I want to turn now to the funding of the various groups working in the field. There are a number of them—we had two in this morning—and I wrote to you recently, Minister, about a charity called Tomorrow's Generation, which is working in Bridgend. I found out this morning that the Welsh Dyslexia Project receives no Welsh Assembly Government money, which surprised me because it provides the expertise through the Welsh language for much of Wales, which is a unique contribution. I would be interested to know whether, as part of your general review and forward planning, you intend to look at the funding for organisations working in the field that can offer such valuable support to teachers, families and the pupils themselves.

[68] **Jane Hutt:** To answer the first part of your question, the recommendation from the committee was that we should recognise and understand the standard definition of dyslexia, that it should be agreed by the Welsh Assembly Government and our partners in local government in Wales to ensure that we have greater consistency. As you know, I sought the advice of the expert group, which advised me that it would be appropriate to carry out the literature review and the audit and benchmarking of effective practice across Wales. So, the work being undertaken is much more than a literature review. We have to recognise the importance of additional topics that have been added, which include a review of cross-linguistic literature on dyslexia, including monolingual and bilingual speakers and readers of various languages, looking at existing work on dyslexia among speakers and readers of Welsh. It is important to have a definition that can guide the Assembly Government and our partners in delivering the services and the early intervention that are vital in educational and clinical provision.

[69] I made the point earlier that we should not see the support for pupils as wholly

dependent on a diagnosis. Intervention should be made at the earliest possible stage to ensure that pupils have equal access to the curriculum. So, Jenny, you are quite right to link it to the training provision with regard to how we can invest as a result of securing this definition and the work that is being undertaken to ensure that we have a common definition of dyslexia to guide us on the pupil-level annual school census. If we do not get that right, the PLASC could be faulty and fail to identify children and young people with these specific learning needs. I would like to bring Amanda in on the importance of looking at co-morbidity issues, which are not necessarily covered at present. I will bring Amanda in and I will then come back to what we are seeking to do with the training opportunities.

10.20 a.m.

[70] **Professor Kirby:** The Rose report is an extensive report that was done in England, looking at dyslexia. The focus of the literary review is on taking all the current evidence and information but also to have the Welsh context. The area that was not looked at in much depth was co-morbidity, the overlap with other conditions, such as dyspraxia and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, which is essential when you are looking at planning for training and service provision, identification and supporting young people. The evidence shows that about 35 per cent or 40 per cent of children with dyslexia also have dyspraxia and that 30 per cent also have ADHD, for example. So, gathering that evidence and looking at speech and language impairment as part of this process is essential because if we do not do that when we are looking at early identification we will miss the children who will go on to have reading and spelling difficulties later on; they will not be identified. That is an essential part of the process, which is different to the English process that has been undertaken.

[71] **Jane Hutt:** The Rose review was very valuable and feeds into the work that Professor Kirby and her colleagues are doing. As I hinted in my opening remarks, we have looked at what is emerging from the Rose review and the UK Government response, and I am asking my officials to work out how much funding would be required to start cluster provision: to fund one teacher in every local cluster, in primary school provision. I am committed to identifying not just the funding but the appropriate training and learning, and resource materials, which will also be required. It will certainly be a progression from the work that is being done. I seek to provide that training opportunity in our schools, and in our primary schools in particular.

[72] The other point about funding for organisations is that we have all-Wales grant schemes that organisations can apply for. Some of those organisations would come within the parameter of those that look at occasional contracting and grant availability for specific projects. Mair might want to comment on that.

[73] **Ms Watkins:** The usual route for a lot of the organisations would be the children and families organisation grants. That money is fully committed for the next two years and I know that Prosiect Dyslecsia Cymru is facing difficulties, because its lottery funding has just run out. We have continued to work with it, but we also work very closely with Bangor University on issues around the Welsh language. We funded Bangor University to develop specific assessment materials for use in our schools in the Welsh language, because there was not a recognised, consistent approach to doing so.

[74] **Gareth Jones:** You mention continuing professional development and training, and Michael Davies from the Welsh Dyslexia Project pointed out to us that that is apparently not available to supply teachers and classroom assistants. Do you have any comment on that? Jenny can then come in.

[75] **Jane Hutt:** There is a robust training opportunity universally, through the foundation phase, for classroom assistants. That is a key module in the training. We have put

considerable investment into the training of classroom assistants to meet the adult-pupil ratio in the foundation phase, but there is also training for those who are working with children with additional learning needs, through the special educational needs code of practice. So, funding is available. However, we are now seeking, more specifically, to confirm a route for definitional purposes. Then, with the Welsh dyslexia association particularly and those with whom it works in collaboration, we will be looking to find the most appropriate course materials available so that we can customise them for Wales. I mentioned the bilingual e-learning course that was developed by the University of Wales, Newport with its partners, and I understand that that has had a big take-up. Do you have anything to add, Mair?

[76] **Ms Watkins:** That is available as a resource to all schools. It is available on the national grid for learning website, so it is accessible to every teacher and classroom assistant. It is only teachers who are going through the accredited course on that, but there is a whole module on specific learning difficulties, which was developed in conjunction with Prosiect Dyslexia Cymru as another partner.

[77] **Jenny Randerson:** I appreciate that you are doing work with Bangor University on the materials, but that is a different role from the sort of work that the Welsh Dyslexia Project is doing. It would be ironic, would it not, if the inability to identify a small amount of money meant that that particular project folded, given that you are trying to develop dyslexia services? Just because one pot of money happens to be committed for the next few years does not mean that there is not another small pot somewhere in the budget. A great deal of money is planned to be spent on this, and that is very much to be welcomed, Minister. We therefore have to make sure that the services are as good for those learning through the medium of Welsh as for those learning through the medium of English.

[78] **Jane Hutt:** I have responded to that, talking about contextualising this in Welsh circumstances, and I regard them to be key partners for us in taking this approach to dyslexia services forward.

[79] **Paul Davies:** I want to press you about an accepted definition of dyslexia. England has accepted such a definition. Can you explain to us why Wales cannot accept that definition?

[80] There appears to be some disagreement about the number of pupils identified as having dyslexia. Several witnesses reported to the rapporteur group that around 10 per cent of pupils have dyslexia, but the pupil-level annual school census identified a low number, around 3 to 4 per cent. Are you concerned about the PLASC data, and do you have any plans to improve the collection of data?

[81] You touched on training. Appropriate training for staff in supporting pupils who have dyslexia is essential. Has any progress been made in increasing the number of specialist dyslexia schoolteachers? If so, can you provide us with the figures?

[82] **Jane Hutt:** I come back to my response of last October to recommendation 1, which was that we have a standard definition of dyslexia agreed by the Welsh Assembly Government and local authorities. That has led to the work that I have already mentioned—quite clearly, I hope—in my responses to Jenny’s questions.

[83] To return to the points that I made in accepting that recommendation, the rapporteur group suggested in its report that providing a single definition of dyslexia can be difficult, and it is dependent on which theory of what constitutes dyslexia the individual support services and agencies adhere to. PLASC is crucial, and getting that right is part of the process. So, as a result of the benchmarking work on definitional opportunities, we will see whether we need to revise PLASC. However, the 2008-09 figures provide us with an opportunity to test whether

the guidance from 2007 is appropriate, because it is there to guide mainstream and special schools and LEAs in how they collect their SEN information. That is why the work with the special educational needs co-ordinators is so important.

10.30 a.m.

[84] It then leads to the monitoring and evaluation of outcomes and initiatives. I would be happy to bring Professor Kirby back in on the importance of the co-morbidity issues, and I hope that that demonstrates that we want to do this thoroughly in Wales. We draw from the Rose report. It was valuable, and there is no question about it. However, I am sure that Members will know from their constituencies that there is an issue of co-morbidity with regard to dyslexia, dyspraxia, and attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder. We have to be robust on this. As I said, we also need to look at the Welsh context, for Welsh speakers and bilingual speakers and readers. I stand by the approach that we are taking in the Welsh Assembly Government and, to respond directly to your recommendation, I believe that we will have a clear and comprehensive way forward to deliver appropriate services. That is the most important point.

[85] Perhaps Amanda would like to come in on the pupil-level annual school census, but this is an opportunity for us to ensure not only that we guide and support an appropriate assessment of need at pupil level at the sharp end of the annual census, but also that the definition be used to ensure that that happens.

[86] **Professor Kirby:** The benchmarking exercise is an important part of the process. We are consulting the SEN advisers in all local authorities to identify the issues with data collection. By defining dyslexia and other specific learning difficulties, the accuracy of our data collection will improve. That is important. We have to be able to count accurately. If you have a definition, you can count accurately and you can then collect better data. It is essential that we do not collect data only on dyslexia, or we will be missing the type of provision that children require and the type of intervention that is appropriate. The literature review is about gathering that evidence of appropriate intervention. That review and the benchmarking are important to define and to see where we need to improve.

[87] **Gareth Jones:** Diolch yn fawr. We have mentioned the rapporteur group, and the last surviving member, as it were, of the group that started it all is Jeff Cuthbert. I now turn to Jeff.

[88] **Jeff Cuthbert:** Chair, you make me feel very old—even older than I am. I want to talk about the near to medium-term future, and I will not bore everyone by repeating everything that I said earlier. Before I do that, I want to say that you may or may not know that I am dyslexic, so this matter is of particular interest to me. Recently, my two brothers and I were clearing out the family home because my mother has now moved to a residential home and we are getting it ready for sale. Unbelievably, we found that she had retained my school reports from primary school. I will look at one here from the summer term of 1959—although I appreciate that no-one could believe that I am that age. I achieved 175 marks out of a total of 210. I was second in the class, but what let me down was my spelling. I achieved only 11 marks out of 20 for spelling, but I got 80 out of 80 for my arithmetic. The teacher's comments were these.

[89] 'Jeffrey has worked well and deserves his position. However, he needs to work hard at spelling.'

[90] That was quite typical of all my reports. I now have them but I can just about remember. At that point, no concession was made for, and there was no understanding of, dyslexia. You were just considered slow in that regard. Despite coming second in the class, I

went on to fail the 11-plus twice, which shows the folly of selection, certainly at that age.

[91] I am sorry about that preamble, but my point is that, were I of that age now, I would be looking forward to education through the foundation phase and then, in due course, the 14 to 19 pathways. I am strongly of the view that the foundation phase, through its emphasis on learning through structured play, will provide far greater opportunities for the earlier identification of dyslexia and other additional learning needs, and a way forward for dealing with them. So, for our youngest learners, everything that we are talking about now needs to be seen in the context of the foundation phase. Minister, are you satisfied that that is the case and that provision is in place to ensure that all those teachers and teaching assistants who will be involved in the delivery of the foundation phase are sufficiently equipped to do so? They will not all be trained to the same degree necessarily, although it would be marvellous if they could be, but there should be a sufficient cohort to fulfil that function. We have heard evidence that one of the benefits of the foundation phase is the early identification of additional learning needs, including dyslexia, through the different approach of ensuring that all children are involved in play activities. Do you agree with that statement, and how will you ensure that the issues are properly monitored and followed up?

[92] **Jane Hutt:** Thank you, Jeff, for that salutary example of what education was like in your childhood—and I will not say ‘back then’. So many children lost out as a result of that lack of understanding and awareness and, I agree, because of the selection process that proceeded. However, look at you now. Look at what you have achieved and what you deliver.

[93] The important recommendations for us to consider are nos. 2 and 5 on early intervention, screening and the training of classroom assistants. That really is the nub of it. The recognition that this committee gave to the importance of screening in English and Welsh is the key. We must remember the Welsh-language context and that screening in Welsh should be made available. I accepted that recommendation in full, and I recognise that early identification is paramount to the development of those pupils who can be identified as having dyslexia. We may want to return to this later on, but we are investing in the development of bilingual screening tests, which relates to recommendation 8. We are already doing that and looking to include best practice in a guidance document for local education authorities and schools.

[94] The point about the foundation phase is critical and has been in the news in recent weeks, because we are rolling it out next year. It is important that we have that universal opportunity to identify additional learning needs at that earlier stage. I reassure you yet again that the foundation phase national training plan includes a module on additional learning needs. It also includes a module on early intervention, which is crucial because it identifies the factors that may lead to an assessment and identification of dyslexia. Therefore, training for our classroom assistants helps them to recognise the possible signs and to identify when additional support may be required.

[95] Interestingly, this also links to another area of work that we are undertaking, namely developing a structure for classroom assistants. Part of that includes looking at their training and continuing professional development. This is also about recognising the importance of their role at the earlier stage of intervention.

[96] I will finish with this point, which is interesting. As a result of the scoping study on training, the need for guidance on partnership working between teachers and teaching assistants has also been recognised. That is important to meet their needs, given the requirements of the foundation phase. So, we are looking at the structures. The classroom assistant has that very direct adult-to-pupil contact, so they can focus on dyslexia, for example, and the link with the teacher is then crucial in taking this forward. It then all starts to steer us towards identification and early intervention.

10.40 a.m.

[97] **Nerys Evans:** Ategaf sylwadau Jenny am ddyfodol Prosiect Dyslecsia Cymru. Yr ydych wedi gwneud gwaith da o ran datblygu gwasanaethau a byddai'n ofnadwy pe bai gwaith y prosiect hwnnw'n cael ei ddiddymu oherwydd diffyg cefnogaeth ariannol.

Nerys Evans: I reiterate Jenny's comments about the future of the Welsh Dyslexia Project. You have done great work on developing services and it would be terrible if that project's work was abandoned because of a lack of financial support.

[98] Yr wyf am holi am wasanaeth dyslecsia ar gyfer plant Cymraeg iaith gyntaf. Yr wyf yn derbyn pa mor hanfodol yw datblygu gwasanaethau yn eu hiaith gyntaf i blant sydd â dyslecsia. Pan mae plant Cymraeg iaith gyntaf yn cael eu hannog i dderbyn gwasanaethau drwy gyfrwng y Saesneg, mae'n cymhlethu'r broses.

I want to ask about a dyslexia service for children whose first language is Welsh. I accept how essential it is for services for children with dyslexia to be developed in their first language. When children whose first language is Welsh are encouraged to access services through the medium of English, it complicates the process.

[99] Yr wyf hefyd am ofyn i chi ynglŷn â'r cyfrifoldeb am y gwaith o ddatblygu gwasanaethau i blant sy'n derbyn addysg cyfrwng Cymraeg. Yr ydych wedi trosglwyddo'r cyfrifoldeb hwnnw i'r gangen addysg Gymraeg yn yr adran addysg yn hytrach nag i'r gangen anghenion addysg arbennig. Pam wnaethpwyd hynny? Yr ydych yn datblygu strategaeth addysg Gymraeg, sydd i'w chrosawu wrth gwrs, ond a oes perygl bod anghysondeb yn yr amserlen, gyda'r amserlen ar gyfer strategaeth addysg Gymraeg ddwy flynedd tu ôl i'r amserlen i ddatblygu gwasanaethau dyslecsia cyffredinol? A allwch sicrhau na fydd y ddarpariaeth Gymraeg o dan anfantais oherwydd y trosglwyddiad hwnnw?

I also have a question about the responsibility for the work of developing services for children who access Welsh-medium education. You have transferred that responsibility to the Welsh-medium education branch in the education department rather than to the special educational needs branch. Why was that done? You are developing a Welsh-medium education strategy, which is to be welcomed of course, but is there a danger of a mismatch in the timetable, given that the timetable for the Welsh-medium education strategy is two years behind the timetable to develop general dyslexia services? Will you ensure that Welsh-medium provision is not disadvantaged because of that transfer?

[100] Clywsom y bore yma ynglŷn â'r diffyg gwasanaethau awdurdod lleol i blant sy'n derbyn addysg Gymraeg, gydag awdurdodau lleol yn eu hannog i drosglwyddo i ysgolion Saesneg os gwelir eu bod yn dioddef o ddyslecsia. Yr wyf wedi ysgrifennu atoch yn ddiweddar ynglŷn ag un awdurdod lleol yng Nghanolbarth a Gorllewin Cymru. Mae'r mwyafrif yn y sir yn siarad Cymraeg, ond nid oes gwasanaeth ar gyfer plant sy'n cael addysg Gymraeg. Nid oes ffordd i'w hasesu drwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg ar hyn o bryd ac nid yw'n ymddangos fod unrhyw un yn yr adran yn deall y sefyllfa. Beth yw eich rôl chi o ran cyfarwyddo awdurdodau addysg yn y maes hwn? Ai chi ynteu'r awdurdodau addysg sy'n

We heard this morning about the lack of local authority services for children in Welsh-medium education, with local authorities encouraging them to transfer to English-medium schools if they are found to be suffering with dyslexia. I have written to you recently about one local authority in Mid and West Wales. Most people in the county speak Welsh, but there is no service for children in Welsh-medium education. There is no way of assessing them through the medium of Welsh at the moment and no-one in the department seems to understand the situation. What is your role in instructing education authorities in this field? Does the responsibility for developing these services lie with you or with the education authorities? Who is responsible

gyfrifol am ddatblygu'r gwasanaethau hyn? for ensuring that children in Welsh-medium
 Pwy sy'n gyfrifol am sicrhau bod plant sy'n education receive the same service from their
 mynd drwy'r system addysg Gymraeg yn local authorities as other children?
 cael yr un gwasanaeth gan eu hawdurdodau
 lleol â phlant eraill?

[101] **Jane Hutt:** I hope to be able to put your mind at rest immediately about one thing. We consulted on our national Welsh-medium education strategy. For all the services, the provision and work that is being done, particularly in relation to additional learning needs, is ongoing, developing and progressing. Perhaps I can ask Mair to elaborate on that, because, in a sense, the Welsh-medium education strategy is about what we can do next and what more we can do about the specific needs of those in Welsh-medium and bilingual provision. I hope that that reassures you. It all comes under me, as the one Minister. It has to be about mainstreaming, as well as that focus that that part of my department gives.

[102] I have already mentioned that quite a lot work has been undertaken already, for example, on standardised measures for the assessment of Welsh. We have already put some more funding into that. That came from the recognition of those needs following the SEN code of practice. A Welsh version of Swansea local education authority's all-Wales reading test was made available in 2005 to all local authorities—Amanda, you may want to comment on that. So, there is a rolling out of that expert material. Also, across the board, we have the screening test, which I have mentioned, and Welsh-medium opportunities, and there is the translation of early support materials and funding for 'O Gam i Gam', which you will know is a resource to guide the teaching of children with dyslexia. I think that screening and support in Welsh-medium education are important. It will also guide us, as will the national Welsh-medium education strategy, as to the way forward. Amanda, would you like to say something on the context of the literature review of benchmarking?

[103] **Professor Kirby:** The benchmarking exercise will be very important as a way of going out to the authorities to find out what they are using and where the gaps are, and whether current materials that have been developed are being used on the ground. Are the screening tools and the reading tests that have been developed for five to 12 year-olds being utilised? That will be important, because having tests and materials is one thing, but using them is another. Being able to map out where that is happening and where it is not will be important in ensuring even provision across Wales, and in making sure that there are no examples of things being used in some areas but not in others. The benchmarking process is important to see what is happening in reality.

[104] **Nerys Evans:** Mae'n dda clywed am yr adnoddau a'r deunyddiau sy'n cael eu datblygu, ond beth am bersonél awdurdodau addysg a'u dealltwriaeth hwy o'r sefyllfa? Ar hyn o bryd mae rhieni yn gorfod brwydro hyd yn oed i gael profion i weld os yw eu plentyn yn ddyslecsig, felly beth am y ddealltwriaeth o fewn awdurdodau lleol o'r gwahaniaeth sylfaenol sy'n bodoli wrth i blentyn fynd drwy'r gyfundrefn addysg cyfrwng Gymraeg? Pwy sy'n gyfrifol? Yn amlwg mae llawer o'r pethau hyn wedi eu datganoli i awdurdodau lleol, ac felly y dylai fod, ond os nad oes pobl yn ein hawdurdodau lleol yn deall y sefyllfa, beth yw eich rôl chi fel Gweinidog? Mae'n ffantastig clywed am y gwaith yr ydych yn ei wneud o ran datblygu

Nerys Evans: It is good to hear about the resources and materials that are being developed, but what about education authority personnel and their understanding of the situation? Parents currently have to fight even to secure a test to see whether their child is dyslexic, so what about people's understanding within local authorities of the fundamental difference that exists when a child is in the Welsh-medium education system? Where does the responsibility lie? Clearly, many of these issues have been devolved to local authorities, and that is how it should be, but if people within our local authorities do not understand the situation, what is your role as Minister? It is fantastic to hear of the work that you are doing on

deunyddiau, ond mae angen mwy na hynny. Mae angen sicrhau bod pobl yn ein hawdurdodau lleol yn deall pa mor sensitif yw'r sefyllfa. developing materials, but more than that is needed. We must ensure that people in our local authorities understand how sensitive the situation is.

[105] **Jane Hutt:** The benchmarking is an opportunity, as a result of the literature review. The expert group will meet with every local education authority in Wales to assess current practice and delivery, and also the response to an emerging definition, which is a result of the review. As Amanda said, that will be important in identifying the gaps and lack of consistency. We are also taking advice from the National Association of Principal Educational Psychologists on this matter in relation to how we can ensure that LEAs are delivering. There are statutory expectations as far as this is concerned.

[106] **Professor Kirby:** Absolutely. There are statutory expectations, as outlined in the code of practice. The Minister has already recognised that there are issues. The former Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills Committee's review of SEN, when it looked at the statutory assessment statement, brought those issues forward to us, which is why we are now looking at reforming the whole process. It will take time. This month we are starting pilot projects across eight authorities, looking at how we meet the needs of those with complex and non-complex needs, and the role of the additional learning needs co-ordinator. That is coming through. We have links with every local authority, so the evidence will not just be anecdotal; we will go in to find out what they are doing, and show them, if you like, through guidance what is good practice and what they should be doing. If an authority is failing to meet its duties, the Minister has the power to direct it to do so, but we need the evidence to say that that is definitely not happening.

[107] **Gareth Jones:** Those are all the pressing questions, Minister. I thank you and your colleagues on behalf of the committee. You will be aware that there is genuine cross-party concern and interest in this important and challenging area; that was the cornerstone of the rapporteur group's work. Having listened to the discussions this morning, we are very much aware that many things are ongoing. Sometimes people have to be patient, as those developments may bring rewards at the end of all this. I am hoping that the brief follow-up report that we will produce will inform people and interested parties—those who are directly involved, for example from the voluntary sector—as to exactly what is happening. A lot is happening, but it will take a few years for it to come to fruition, and to be as we would wish to see it.

[108] Felly, gyda'r ychydig eiriau hynny, diolch ichi am eich amser y bore yma. Y neges gan y pwyllgor yw daliwch ati i ymateb i her arbennig dyslecsia. Diolch yn fawr. With those few words, many thanks to you for your time this morning. The message from the committee that you should continue to respond to the particular challenge of dyslexia. Thank you.

[109] Mae papur i'w nodi, sef y cofnodion. There is a paper to note, namely the minutes.

10.50 a.m.

Cynnig Trefniadol Procedural Motion

[110] **Gareth Jones:** Cynigiau fod

Gareth Jones: I move that

y pwyllgor yn penderfynu gwahardd y cyhoedd o weddill y cyfarfod yn unol â Rheol Sefydlog Rhif 10.37(vi). *the committee resolves to exclude the public from the remainder of the meeting in accordance with Standing Order No.*

10.37(vi).

[111] Gwelaf fod y pwyllgor yn gytûn.

I see that the committee is in agreement.

Derbyniwyd y cynnig.

Motion agreed.

Daeth rhan gyhoeddus y cyfarfod i ben am 10.50 p.m.

The public part of the meeting ended at 10.50 p.m.