

Kirsty Williams AM
Cabinet Secretary for Education
Welsh Government
5th Floor
Tŷ Hywel
Cardiff Bay
CF99 1NA

22nd January 2018

Report on the Teachers' Professional Learning and Education inquiry¹

Dear Cabinet Secretary,

You will be aware of the Children, Young People and Education Committee's (CYPEC) recent Report into "Teachers' Professional Learning and Education", published in December.

We are grateful for the time which the CYPEC has put into considering these critical issues and welcome the Conclusions of the report, especially:

"Conclusion 1. The education workforce is not currently prepared for the implementation of the new curriculum."

and

"Conclusion 4. Teachers' professional development should be valued in its own right, and recognised as tool for support (*sic*) teacher growth, rather than as a performance management tool."

We would welcome any opportunity to assist you with shaping how these conclusions become a reality for the workforce, especially in light of the way in which the recommendations of the report highlight issues around training and workload. These are issues which we have consistently raised with your Officials over a number of years, and which you will note came out as strong concerns for the whole workforce

¹ <http://www.assembly.wales/laid%20documents/cr-ld11338/cr-ld11338-e.pdf>

(including supply teachers) in the Education Workforce Council's Workforce Survey².

Indeed, many of the CYPEC's recommendations are very welcome as we strongly believe that professional learning opportunities for all staff are critical to delivering the Curriculum for Wales.

However, we have very serious concerns about Recommendations 19³, 20 and 21.

Recommendation 19

We believe that this recommendation contradicts the findings of the Committee in Conclusion 4. We have always been led to believe from our engagement with the Welsh Government that the new Professional Standards for Teaching and Leadership have been created to provide a resource for teachers to take ownership of their own professional development and not as a tool for performance management.

We would also highlight that within the Professional Standards for Teaching and Leadership there are clear 'baseline' expectations that must be met for the award of Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) and for successful completion of statutory induction⁴. For us, these describe a "measure to identify the standards expected of a teacher in order to undertake their role effectively" and we feel strongly that no further such measure is required.

Recommendations 20 and 21

We also have serious concerns about Recommendations 20⁵ and 21. We believe that these recommendations are predicated on a misunderstanding about the intended purpose of the standards which, as stated above, we have been reassured are quite separate from disciplinary procedures. These standards are not a Code of Conduct, but rather, a backdrop to professional development..

² <https://www.ewc.wales/site/index.php/en/research-statistics/national-education-workforce-survey>

³ Recommendation 19. The Cabinet Secretary should consider the extent to which the new professional standards provide an adequate baseline for teacher performance, and revise the standards to include a measure to identify the standards expected of a teacher in order to undertake their role effectively.

⁴ <http://learning.gov.wales/docs/learningwales/publications/170901-professional-standards-for-teaching-and-leadership-en.pdf>

⁵ Recommendation 20. The remit of the Education Workforce Council should be extended to include responsibility for professional standards.

The Education Workforce Council already has the power to investigate and hear allegations of unacceptable professional conduct and serious professional incompetence, and to monitor Induction and hear Induction appeals for teachers. We cannot understand on what basis or for what reasons the Committee would want to recommend further powers to suspend teachers.

Were the EWC elected and governed by members of the professions it represents, we could perhaps envisage an extension of its remit to include responsibility for professional standards. However, until the EWC is democratically elected, we are unable to support any extension of its remit.

We trust that you will have our concerns in mind when responding to the CYPEC's Report, and would welcome any opportunities discuss the Report with you further.

Yours sincerely,

David Evans – National Education Union Cymru

Keith Bowen – National Education Union Cymru

Elizabeth Williams – Voice the Union

Elaine Edwards – UCAC

CC: Lynne Neagle AM, Chair, Children, Young People and Education Committee