



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

Y Pwyllgor Plant a Phobl Ifanc **The Children and Young People Committee**

Dydd Mercher, 23 Tachwedd 2011
Wednesday, 23 November 2011

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Motion under Standing Order No. 17.42 to Resolve to Exclude the Public

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

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

Aelodau'r pwyllgor yn bresennol**Committee members in attendance**

Angela Burns	Ceidwadwyr Cymreig Welsh Conservatives
Christine Chapman	Llafur (Cadeirydd y Pwyllgor) Labour (Committee Chair)
Jocelyn Davies	Plaid Cymru The Party of Wales
Keith Davies	Llafur Labour
Suzy Davies	Ceidwadwyr Cymreig Welsh Conservatives
Julie Morgan	Llafur Labour
Lynne Neagle	Llafur Labour
Jenny Rathbone	Llafur Labour
Aled Roberts	Democratiaid Rhyddfrydol Cymru Welsh Liberal Democrats
Simon Thomas	Plaid Cymru The Party of Wales

Eraill yn bresennol**Others in attendance**

Ann Keane	Prif Arolygydd Addysg a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales
Dr Chris Llewelyn	Cyfarwyddwr Dysgu Gydol Oes, Hamdden a Gwybodaeth, Cymdeithas Llywodraeth Leol Cymru Director of Lifelong Learning, Leisure and Information, Welsh Local Government Association
Karl Napieralla	Cyfarwyddwr Addysg, Castell-nedd Port Talbot, Cymdeithas Cyfarwyddwyr Addysg Cymru Director of Education, Neath Port Talbot, Association of Directors of Education in Wales
Meilyr Rowlands	Cyfarwyddwr Strategol, Estyn Strategic Director, Estyn

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

Claire Morris	Clerc Clerk
Claire Griffiths	Dirprwy Glerc Deputy Clerk
Anne Thomas	Gwasanaeth Ymchwil Research Service

*Dechreuodd y cyfarfod am 9.14 a.m.
The meeting began at 9.14 a.m.*

Cyflwyniad, Ymddiheuriadau a Dirprwyon Introduction, Apologies and Substitutions

[1] **Christine Chapman:** Welcome to the Children and Young People Committee. There are no apologies today.

9.15 a.m.

Gweithredu Mesur Dysgu a Sgiliau (Cymru) 2009: Sesiwn Dystiolaeth Implementation of the Learning and Skills (Wales) Measure 2009: Evidence Session

[2] **Christine Chapman:** Today we are taking evidence from the Welsh Local Government Association. I welcome both witnesses. Members will have read your paper, and if you are happy, we will go straight into questions. Before we do that, could you introduce yourselves for the record?

[3] **Dr Llewelyn:** My name is Chris Llewelyn, and I am the director of lifelong learning at the WLGA. I will let Karl introduce himself. He is here in his capacity as a WLGA adviser.

[4] **Mr Napieralla:** I am Karl Napieralla, and I am also the corporate director of education, leisure and lifelong learning at Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council. I am currently a vice-chair of the Association of Directors of Education Wales, as well as being an adviser to the WLGA.

[5] **Christine Chapman:** Welcome to you both. We have been looking at the Learning and Skills (Wales) Measure 2009, which is about increasing choice for learners. Are there groups of learners for whom this Measure has not increased the choice of courses?

[6] **Mr Napieralla:** I would have said not. In fact, it has enriched the diet that young people are having from the ages of 14 to 19. In the area that I represent, there has been considerable joint curriculum planning, which has led to choices being available right across the ability spectrum. The evidence that we have from co-ordinators, both regionally and nationally, but particularly with local evidence from my authority, is that the Measure is providing that level of choice. We have had a tertiary set-up in my area for some years, so there is a slight difference there.

[7] **Dr Llewelyn:** May I add to that? At a national level, across the board, it has been successful. I was looking through some of the written evidence that you have received, and that is borne out by the evidence. Certainly, the feedback that we get from authorities and from 14-19 co-ordinators suggests that, but it is fair to say that it is more challenging in some circumstances than others. In rural areas and sparsely populated areas, and in Welsh-medium and bilingual provision, the challenges are greater. From the evidence that we have seen, to which Karl referred, by and large it has been effective.

[8] **Mr Napieralla:** The key has been the shared planning approach. Where that is well developed, and where you have had good communication, and perhaps less competition, it has come together a lot more seamlessly than in areas without a history of learning partnership to the same degree. It is particularly encouraging across Wales, and although some areas or regions are a little behind, they are not that far behind, I would not have said.

[9] **Christine Chapman:** I will just pursue that point. This is a universal Measure, so it should be benefitting everybody, but sometimes there is a danger—and I am not talking about young people with special or additional needs particularly, but the more middle-range

youngsters—that some could slip through the cracks. I wonder if you feel that it is beneficial to them, and whether it is lifting their skills and educational choices.

[10] **Dr Llewelyn:** Karl can probably give some detail on the experiences of learners in Neath Port Talbot. However, it is worth bearing in mind that the sector has not always had a culture of collaboration and co-operation, and the funding system hitherto has not really pushed in that direction. So, things have improved in recent months and years and I expect that to continue, given this culture shift away from a kind of protectionist approach towards collaboration between institutions, sectors and authorities. I expect to see that pace of change accelerating, which then means that, if there are learners falling through the cracks, that number will diminish as time goes by.

[11] **Keith Davies:** Karl, dywedocho fod y system drydyddol wedi bodoli yng Nghastell-nedd Port Talbot ers rhai blynyddoedd, a derbyniaf hynny, ond yr ydym bellach yn symud i edrych ar addysg ôl-16. Yng Nghastell-nedd Port Talbot, mae gennych un ysgol Gymraeg sydd â chweched dosbarth ac un ysgol Babyddol sydd â chweched dosbarth. Fodd bynnag, mewn siroedd eraill, ceir mwy na dwy ysgol â chweched dosbarth, felly maent yn gallu rhannu'r ddarpariaeth. Sut yr ymdopir yn eich ardal chi i gynnig 30 o gysiau, ag 20 y cant o'r rheini yn rhai galwedigaethol, drwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg yn Ysgol Gyfun Ystalyfera—fel yr unig ysgol Gymraeg yn eich ardal—ac yn yr ysgol Babyddol? Sut y bydd hynny'n gweithio yn y sector ôl-16?

Keith Davies: Karl, you said that the tertiary system has existed in Neath Port Talbot for some years, and I accept that, but we are now moving to look at post-16 education. In Neath Port Talbot, you have one Welsh-medium school that has a sixth form and one Catholic school that has a sixth form. However, other counties have more than two schools with a sixth form, so they can share provision. How will you cope in your area with providing 30 courses, with 20 per cent of them vocational, through the medium of Welsh in Ysgol Gyfun Ystalyfera—as the only Welsh-medium school—and in the Catholic school? How will that work in the post-16 sector?

[12] **Mr Napieralla:** The key is in what I said earlier about joint curriculum planning. There are already well-developed links between the Welsh-medium sixth form and Neath Port Talbot College in particular with regard to the provision of Welsh-medium vocational education. In a truly collaborative sense, the Measure was not designed to ensure that every school was delivering 30 choices, but that they could be developed in a learning partnership. In Wales, particularly in the south-west, we will see wider learning partnerships than just schools and further education. For example, skills and training departments, whether they are run by local authorities or the private sector, are also aiding that scenario.

[13] There are challenges, particularly in the Welsh-medium sector. There are not enough tutors and teachers who can deliver through the medium of Welsh, which is a challenge. The effects of any funding cuts will exacerbate that as well, so we must be careful. With regard to the link with economic development in my area, for example, Neath Port Talbot College is liable to be involved in the development of a new campus in the town of Port Talbot. That is currently being redeveloped. Likewise, in our strategic programme, which has been submitted to the Welsh Government's twenty-first century schools programme, the quid pro quo for a remodelled campus approach for the faith education school is that we reinforced the tertiary scenario. So, there will be a need for increased partnership, given that any new provision for faith education will be for the 11 to 16 age group, because the current post-16 arrangements do not reflect faith education. So, that was a condition for including the school in the swap, which it has signed up to.

[14] I am not pretending that there are no challenges, Keith, but joint curriculum planning is the key to this, and not just in the schools sector—FE and other providers are also involved

in that. Our 14-19 curriculum planning has just won an award, so that might be an example of good practice that you might hear about from Estyn, as well as something that we can put forward that can be shared with the rest of Wales.

[15] **Jocelyn Davies:** I want to know how the joint curriculum planning actually works; perhaps we could have a note on that, rather than have you explain it now. You mentioned the funding system earlier, Dr Llewelyn: is it that having asked institutions to compete against each other and then to collaborate has caused tension? We had some evidence on this a while ago. Are you aware that schools and colleges are offering courses in order to tick the 30-courses box? They know that kids are not going to take them up, but they deliberately offer them just so that they can say that they are offering 30.

[16] **Dr Llywelyn:** I am not familiar with the examples that you are referring to. Inevitably, over time, where you have a funding system that encourages competition, those situations will arise. As I mentioned earlier, I also think that there has traditionally been a culture of competition in the system, for a variety of reasons, but it is in part driven by the funding system. Hopefully, that will change, and I think that the current review of the national planning and funding system will look at those issues. If you think back to why the current funding formula was put in place, the intention was that funding should follow the learner, and that there should be an element of continuity in funding that should allow institutions to plan year on year. However, I think that the impact of the national planning and funding system over recent years has almost been the opposite. Year on year, institutions are unable to plan because there are quite volatile swings in funding, and that drives institutions to respond in a competitive way, which in this instance does not benefit the learner by fostering the kind of collaboration that is needed to use resources as effectively and as efficiently as possible.

[17] The culture change that is needed to avoid the sort of situations that you referred to is taking place, and the review of the funding formula is welcome, because I would expect that to have an impact, too.

[18] **Mr Napieralla:** I would echo that. This is about how well developed the 14-19 networks are becoming. In our case, the co-ordinator was employed by us, the county borough council, but was in effect seconded from Neath Port Talbot College. There are a number of local area networks where the same thing has happened. If we were talking about three years ago, I would probably agree with you, because at that stage, an analysis of the key stage 4 options basically indicated that four of the 11 comprehensive schools in the area were offering fewer than 26 options, with the lowest being 19. By September 2011, however, all schools had met the requirements of the learning and skills Measure for a band B authority, which is what we are. So, the 30 options were being delivered.

[19] One of the keys to that, alluding to what Keith Davies said earlier, is what we and many other authorities have done, namely to split the authority into clusters. We have an A cluster and a B cluster, and in our case, it is easier because they are coterminous with two tertiary sites. The important thing is to ask what joint curriculum planning has brought. It is an extensive collaborative menu of all sorts of courses, but I would not leave it there, because I think that you have to evaluate, and one of the things that we have done is some research, supported by pupil surveys, at the end of year 10, and that has shown that the delivery of 14-19 collaborative courses in our area has been a major success. Comments from the pupils show that pupil choice is genuine and unrestricted. That is the evidence that is coming out. Where there is truly collaborative curriculum planning, there is a better chance of achieving the antithesis of the example that you gave.

9.30 a.m.

[20] **Jocelyn Davies:** That was the evidence that we were given by the people from whom

we took evidence last time. They said that, not me. It was not an accusation that I put to them; that is what they told us.

[21] **Christine Chapman:** I want to move on to Angela Burns's questions.

[22] **Angela Burns:** I would like to explore the collaboration issue a little bit more. In your evidence, you have said that the increase in the number of courses, and so on, has been made possible in many areas by the increased collaboration between schools, further education institutions, and local authorities. What evidence do you have for this?

[23] **Dr Llewelyn:** Our evidence comes from the authorities themselves, specifically from the 14-19 co-ordinators. At a national level, we work quite closely with ColegauCymru—Fforwm, as it used to be—and we get the same message from it. Having looked at the evidence that has been provided to your committee from various stakeholders, it seems that there is consensus on that issue.

[24] **Angela Burns:** I am trying to get to the bottom of the subjective opinion and objective fact. Estyn, in its report 'Wider choice and the learning core—progress in implementing a wider option choice and the learning core for 14-19 learners', states clearly that

[25] 'In only a few cases are schools and colleges working together effectively.'

[26] It goes on to say that schools do not always provide impartial advice and that students are being forced down a particular learning route because they can study only the courses that are available in that particular school. It states that schools with sixth forms are reluctant to collaborate in case they lose pupils to colleges, and so on. However, I am particularly interested in the statement that it is only in a few cases that schools and colleges are working together effectively. Believe me, I will be asking Estyn about its evidence as well. You are diametrically opposed.

[27] **Dr Llewelyn:** The evidence base that Estyn is using is probably a bit older. I have looked at some of its reports and its evidence and, although I could be wrong, I suspect that it may be looking back over a longer period of time. In terms of the advice being given, that is an interesting point, because I have also heard that comment and it conflicts with the views that are presented to us. If you take as an example the learning coach role, our assessment would be that that is working effectively and developing well, but there is a strong element of perception and subjectivity about that in terms of the Estyn comment about pupils not always being given the best advice. Determining what constitutes the best advice is a subjective issue, and it is about perception. The feedback that we get from 14-19 co-ordinators is very positive and encouraging.

[28] **Angela Burns:** Are the 14-19 co-ordinators, or the local authorities, that have responded to you only small in number, which would mean that this works very well in only a couple of authorities, or are you saying that, broadly, across all 22 local authorities, we have arrived?

[29] **Dr Llewelyn:** I am presenting a broad perspective. On that point, I am quite happy to go back and interrogate that further.

[30] **Angela Burns:** It would be really interesting if we could understand that. You must have called for evidence to prepare this paper. It would be interesting to understand which authorities responded and gave evidence.

[31] **Dr Llewelyn:** We can interrogate the information that we have received, but we can

also pursue this point. It is clearly contested, so it would be useful to get more clarity so that we can pursue it in further detail.

[32] **Mr Napieralla:** We meet our co-ordinators regularly. There was a mixed message some years ago, but we are getting much more positive messages now. I can only speak from experience in the south-west, but our local network also works with neighbouring networks in Swansea, Powys and Carmarthenshire. Through what we call the SWaMWaC region, the picture is becoming increasingly positive. It might have something to do with the fact that we have a very proactive regional learning partnership in the south-west, which has formalised itself and has received some convergence funding to take this forward in a true partnership approach. The picture was extremely mixed when that was in its inception in 2007, but there is now a much different perception from college principals and headteachers in the region, and from local authority representatives like me. While we acknowledge that it is still a developing picture, there is much more transparency now where there was a lot of hidden stuff going on before. So, the twin tracks of the South West and Mid Wales Consortium approach and the wider approach of the regional learning partnership have certainly helped in our area.

[33] However, I also feel that there have been genuine debates at a national level about competition rather than collaboration, and a focus on the efficiency of certain courses that are being run by certain establishments. When we initially started in an area such as ours, you had mainstream subject courses post-16 being offered to five, six or eight people in three separate institutions, which was nonsense. So, clearer direction from the Welsh Government would help to quicken the pace of change in that respect.

[34] **Christine Chapman:** The point that the committee is looking at is that the picture seems to be improving, but it is a bit concerning that we still have a patchy picture across Wales. This is about systemic change, so it is good if there are strong partnerships, but it is about evaluating how the others can be brought up to the standard of the best practice. It would be helpful if you could provide an assessment of the situation across Wales.

[35] **Dr Llewelyn:** We can certainly do that.

<p>[36] Aled Roberts: A oes tystiolaeth gadarn ym mhob sir am faint o blant sy'n mynd o un sefydliad i'r llall sy'n cael eu cludo? Y rheswm yr wyf yn gofyn yw y gwneuthum ymweld â chweched dosbarth yn Wrecsam fore Llun, ac yr oedd rhyw 100 o bobl ifanc yn y gynulleidfa. Dim ond chwech ohonynt oedd yn rhannu amserlen gyda sefydliad arall. Mae dau chweched dosbarth yn sir Wrecsam, ond os mai dim ond chwech myfyriwr oedd yn rhannu amserlen rhwng y ddau chweched dosbarth, bydd llawer o arian yn cael ei wario ar nifer fach iawn o blant.</p>	<p>Aled Roberts: Is there robust evidence in every county regarding how many children that move from one establishment to another use transport services? I ask because I visited a sixth form in Wrexham on Monday morning, and there were about 100 young people in the audience. Only six of them shared a timetable with another establishment. There are two sixth forms in the county of Wrexham, but if only six students were sharing a timetable between the two sixth forms, significant expenditure will be spent on a very small number of children.</p>
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[37] **Mr Napieralla:** I apologise—the translation did not come through.

[38] **Aled Roberts:** I will ask it in English. Is there hard evidence in each county regarding the number of youngsters who are operating under a shared curriculum and receiving transport? I went to speak to a sixth form in Wrexham on Monday and there were about 100 youngsters there. Out of the 100, only six of them received any part of their timetable in another institution, so 94 of them were being taught purely at that school. In that situation, we will have created an arrangement in one county where, to all intents and

purposes, another layer will have been imposed, and there will be transport expenditure. There are three sixth forms left in Wrexham, one of which is Welsh-medium. If there are only six students in the other English-medium sixth form receiving shared timetables, it means that the whole system is operating for the benefit of 12 individuals.

[39] **Mr Napieralla:** That is a particularly mixed picture, which could get worse, especially if the cuts that we expect come to fruition and have a marked effect on transport. In my part of the world, it is a lot tighter than that. We have evidence of much greater flexibility locally. When we kicked this off, co-ordinators were very concerned about transport issues across the south-west. However, on a national level, the kind of evidence that has just been mentioned has not emerged as an issue to any great extent. There is a wealth of movement between institutions. Some of the joint curriculum planning has led to designating afternoons or mornings during which certain courses are provided at local colleges or sixth forms, and these have attracted a number of young people. So, I have not seen this as an issue locally. I guess that this is one of the areas in which there is a mixed picture across Wales, and we need to look into it. I am not sure whether Chris has anything to add.

[40] **Dr Llewelyn:** Hoffwn ymateb i'r hyn a ddywedwyd eisoes. O ran yr adborth yr ydym wedi'i gael ar lefel genedlaethol, nid yw trafniadaeth wedi achosi'r problemau na'r pwysau ariannol yr oeddem yn eu disgwyl ar y cychwyn. Serch hynny, nid yw'r wybodaeth fanwl y soniwyd amdani ar gael inni. Efallai y gallwn ni fynd ar drywydd y mater hwnnw ar ôl y cyfarfod hwn, a gofyn i awdurdodau lleol am ragor o fanylion, er mwyn cael darlun mwy eglur o'r sefyllfa hon ar lefel genedlaethol.

Dr Llewelyn: I would like to respond to what was said previously. In terms of the feedback that we have had at a national level, transport has not caused the problems and financial pressures that we had anticipated at the outset. However, the detailed information that was mentioned is not available to us. Perhaps we can follow this issue up after the meeting, and we can ask local authorities for more details so that we can have a clearer picture of this situation at a national level.

[41] **Aled Roberts:** A fyddai'n bosibl i ni gael y dystiolaeth honno?

Aled Roberts: Would it be possible for us to have that evidence?

[42] **Christine Chapman:** Yes, we can ask for that.

[43] **Mr Napieralla:** I would like to add one thing, based on our experience in the south-west. Increasingly, members of staff are travelling rather than the pupils. So, there are examples of subjects, mostly vocational, being delivered at school sites by college lecturers. There is not a great deal of interaction the other way around, in our experience.

[44] **Jenny Rathbone:** What financial savings have been achieved by schools as a result of this collaborative working?

[45] **Mr Napieralla:** I do not think that I would be able to quantify them. I certainly do not have the information in front of me. Schools and colleges are extremely worried across the region. The contention is that regional planning will lead to efficiency savings. Well, we have already done a lot of planning across the region. For example, we already have a banker authority in the south-west that is able to administer the grant, based on the results of local curriculum planning. I have not seen a great deal of evidence of real, hard, cashable efficiency savings. I have seen growth in the quality of provision and the ability to quantify, due to the evaluation that we have conducted, the value-added nature of these activities, in terms of key stage 4 outcomes. I am afraid that I do not have evidence of cashable savings.

[46] **Jenny Rathbone:** Okay. It has already been announced that there will be budget reductions for next year and the following year. How will they be achieved?

[47] **Mr Napiaralla:** They are going to be very difficult to achieve. We have looked at the situation across the south-west, and these reductions are going to lead to quite a few limitations. Some of these will relate to transport, which you mentioned earlier, and there will also be limitations on provision. In the south-west, we are going to be operating on a hub scenario, and this will probably lead over the next couple of years, if not immediately, to having single co-ordinators in those hubs. There are cashable savings to be derived there from closer co-operation, but not within the timescale that the Welsh Government expects. A saving of 19 per cent, even if that is phased in over two years, is quite considerable.

9.45 a.m.

[48] **Jenny Rathbone:** Estyn flags up that quite a few courses are being run with only five or six students, and that the same courses are being run in other institutions with five or six students. Is that not the sort of thing that one would expect to be tackled?

[49] **Dr Llewelyn:** May I come in there?

[50] **Mr Napiaralla:** Most definitely.

[51] **Dr Llewelyn:** I think that you are right. Despite Karl's point that, at this stage it is difficult to identify savings in cash terms, what is reasonable to assume is that, through collaboration, we would see resources used more effectively and more efficiently. We would also expect to see rising standards and improved outcomes. We would expect to reduce the level of duplication in the system and we would expect to see needless competition—which has been apparent in the system—reduce over time. We would also expect to see the cultural changes taking place within the system that would support that. The difficulty is that some of that will happen over time and that the proposed cut of 19 per cent over two years is quite a significant one. It is also important to bear in mind that authorities are looking at collaborative working across the board. Within education at the moment, the focus is on creating shared school improvement services by next September, which will deliver savings and efficiencies. However, the capacity and resources are not available to drive collaboration of that scope across all aspects of service.

[52] **Mr Napiaralla:** We have been particularly challenging in our local authority, particularly in the post-16 sector, in bearing in mind that we do not want to see the pre-16 sector subsidise the post-16 sector in the direct funding that is available. We have set about challenging the scenario that you have just painted.

[53] **Jenny Rathbone:** Is that 'challenging' or 'dealing with'?

[54] **Mr Napiaralla:** Dealing with through the challenge—the financial challenge, in terms of efficiencies, and the quality scenario, in terms of the quality of interaction and the quality of teaching and learning. It might well be different. I do not operate in rural areas per se, although some parts of my authority could be regarded as being semi-rural, but we need greater direction to eradicate what you were talking about. That is extremely inefficient and, as I said, when we started in 2008, there was quite a bit of that, but we have more or less eradicated it in our area by the sharing of those resources.

[55] **Jenny Rathbone:** So, you are saying that, in Rhondda Cynon Taf, you have achieved savings.

[56] **Mr Napiaralla:** In Neath Port Talbot.

[57] **Jenny Rathbone:** I beg your pardon; in your own authority. You mentioned that

vocational courses were being delivered by the tutor going to the institution. I wondered about that, because vocational courses require laboratories or work benches rather than just desks.

[58] **Mr Napieralla:** That is one thing that has been extremely successful with this Measure, particularly in terms of capital. We have only invested capital in schools, colleges or even work-based learning institutions where they were prepared to share those facilities. In other words, they have become a cluster facility. For example, one of our schools has a new catering and hairdressing suite, but the courses are delivered by college tutors. With regard to the type of scenario that you were talking about, on a particular afternoon, courses are run at levels 1 and 2 in that school for a variety of people from across the borough. We are trying to have two clusters—clusters A and B—and we have collaborated and invested capital to that end. That takes some development, and I would contend that it represents a real learning partnership in action.

[59] **Jenny Rathbone:** So, you have spread around the capital investment.

[60] **Mr Napieralla:** Yes.

[61] **Christine Chapman:** I remind Members that we have fewer than 25 minutes left, and there are a lot of areas that we want to cover in that time. We now turn to look at digital learning.

[62] **Suzy Davies:** I am happy to accept brief answers to my two questions. The digital learning that we have at the moment is undertaken through video-conferencing and through ICT; can you tell me where digital learning works and where it does not work in the two age groups, pre 16 and post 16?

[63] On the development of technologies, how do you see technology fitting in and helping to deliver the Measure?

[64] **Mr Napieralla:** I do not think that you should look at the matter in terms of pre-16 and post-16 age groups. That has been a problem in the past, where we have had separate learning gateways developing for the two groups. There are excellent developments in Torfaen, and we are developing a learning gateway across the south-west region based on an existing arrangement; I think that it originally came from experiences in Pembrokeshire. The important thing is that these developments involve joint planning for pre-16 and post-16 groups, rather than looking at different solutions for both sectors.

[65] **Suzy Davies:** The reason that I made that distinction is that we have already received evidence that the 14-16 cohort of youngsters needs supervision in using ICT and video-conferencing equipment, whereas perhaps the post-16 cohort does not.

[66] **Mr Napieralla:** That is not our experience. We have done a lot of work on the problems with supervision that could arise in that area. One of the successes has been listening to and involving the students themselves, because they have been able to tell ICT specialists what the dodges are for pre-16 and post-16 learners.

[67] **Suzy Davies:** Where does digital learning work and where does it not? Are there certain subject areas where it is less appropriate?

[68] **Mr Napieralla:** We find that the learning gateway is trying to cover all areas. Where we have, perhaps, had less success is in Welsh-medium digital learning. I think that that is because of a lack of expertise rather than a lack of will from our point of view.

[69] **Dr Llewelyn:** This is probably one of those areas that need more attention. Digital

learning and the use of ICT provide scope for addressing a lot of the issues that have been raised this morning. Whereas I think that there are many interesting developments—the work that is happening in the south-west, Torfaen and in north Wales—and that there is clearly further scope there, digital learning is also an area that has been hit by funding cuts. The 40 per cent cut in the capital available, for example, is having an impact. ICT was one of the big themes of the twenty-first century schools programme. The reduction in capital makes the situation more challenging, but there is further scope for development and the matter needs more attention.

[70] **Keith Davies:** Has the Learning and Skills (Wales) Measure 2009 improved the offer of vocational subjects within schools? Do children who would previously have chosen academic subjects now choose vocational subjects, or is the divide still there? If they do choose vocational subjects, do they choose subjects such as business studies, which, in a sense, is not really a vocational subject?

[71] **Christine Chapman:** Simon Thomas also wants to ask a question on this, so perhaps you could answer both questions together.

[72] **Simon Thomas:** What was the role of the careers service in helping pupils to make this decision? Was that genuine independent advice? Do you have any concerns regarding the future of that advice in light of the cuts that the careers service is facing?

[73] **Mr Napieralla:** I will answer the first question first. There are mixed and conflicting views about whether the parity of esteem between vocational and academic courses has been enhanced. It certainly has not been eradicated. The co-ordinators, generally, across Wales, when they have been asked this question, feel that we are getting there. The Welsh baccalaureate has definitely helped in that. The Deputy Minister's qualifications review will provide a focus on that. However, we still have a lot of work to do with regard to higher education and the business sector in that.

[74] Where there has been successful joint curriculum planning you will see an extensive menu: yes, in business studies, but in Edexcel level 2, extended certificates in engineering, construction, health and social care too. We have level 2 certificates being delivered in retail knowledge and introductory certificates in vocational studies, additional mathematics, as well as the traditional hairdressing and construction subjects. So, although it has not led to an explosion, it has led to a greater breadth in what is being delivered.

[75] In relation to the advice and guidance given, there has always been some concern about what is, perhaps, the tootraditional advice and guidance given by the careers service. I am a board member of Careers Wales West, and I am concerned about any cuts that come as a result of the development of a single company. However, there is high-quality self-evaluation going on, including a lot of surveys of adults and young people. The diet of independent advice and the breadth of advice are particularly strong. However, the real success story with the Measure has been the introduction of the learning coaches. Traditionally, they are not the same as careers advisers; they come at it with a fresh approach. There is evidence that, as a result of engagement with learning coaches, the minds of young people and their aspirations have been broadened.

[76] **Christine Chapman:** I have a couple of questions. I want to bring Aled in as well. On the changes to Careers Wales, there is a distinction between careers education, teachers employed by schools and local authorities and Careers Wales. So, I would be grateful if you could make that distinction in relation to where the issues are. Could you evaluate where the learning coach role is going? Is it about careers advice, or is it about supporting learning styles? What do you see as the role of learning coaches?

[77] **Mr Napieralla:** There is a significant number of trained learning coaches in place now—

[78] **Jocelyn Davies:** I want to know about the role, not who does it.

10.00 a.m.

[79] **Mr Napieralla:** It is a mixture; perhaps it is more about being an element of support for individuals who may have issues that are getting in the way of their learning and of them reaching their full potential. We have seen evidence right across Wales about the involvement of youth services and the voluntary sector is particularly good in that sense. Learning coaching concentrates on the throughput, continuity and progression for 14 to 19-year-olds. It is nonsense if you are starting at 14 not to look at progression into higher education, work or apprenticeships—you should have an entitlement to continue on that path and not have a staccato approach at 16. Learning coaches have been helping young people and guiding them, along with careers staff. Traditionally, careers education has been part of a whole-curriculum approach in schools over the years now, as opposed to being distinct enough from careers teaching. Where there have been successful schemes, it has been picked up by Estyn—it is where the careers member of staff is integrated into the pastoral side of the school. It is seamless. Children do not see them as external people coming in, because they see them regularly and they are involved in a lot of events with them. Particular evidence can be picked up from any authority.

[80] **Christine Chapman:** Going back to Simon Thomas's point, is there an issue with impartiality, because they are part of the system? Is there a question regarding the impartiality of the advice?

[81] **Mr Napieralla:** Where you get quality, you get impartiality. It can be mixed, but the evidence is that it is definitely improved over the last few years. I am seeing that from the reports that we are getting at board level in the south-west.

[82] **Dr Llewelyn:** In some of these areas, inevitably there is a high degree of subjectivity. You would expect that where you have different sectors coming together and working in a more collaborative way for some length of time—you will get an accusation of subjectivity and information being imparted in a partial way. It seems that the learning coach, in that full sense that Karl defined, is gradually overcoming those tensions.

[83] **Aled Roberts:** Taking advantage of your board membership of Careers Wales West, my undersanding is that, based on the original planned reduction in the budget, there were discussions about the number of youngsters who were being given advice being reduced to 75 per cent of the cohort. Given that the budget reduction is now greater than was originally anticipated—and will be down to £35 million eventually—they are now talking about even fewer members of the cohort being given advice. If it goes down to 50 per cent, how will the young people be selected?

[84] **Mr Napieralla:** I honestly do not know. There is always an element of self-selection in this. There is the entitlement, which has been delivered, but there is self-selection in terms of pupils who are unsure and those who are very sure. It is not a debate in which we have necessarily been involved to a great degree.

[85] **Christine Chapman:** Is there a problem if pupils are self-selecting, because you could miss out the youngsters who most need it as they would not necessarily come forward?

[86] **Mr Napieralla:** I would agree with you if it were happening in isolation, but through the 14-19 scenario, we have learning coaches and the safety net of some of the activities that

are going on with the youth service and the third sector, which are picking up the hard-to-reach pupils.

[87] **Christine Chapman:** Is that the case across Wales?

[88] **Mr Napieralla:** My experience is that this is an area of strength and that is what the co-ordinators tell us. We have not done any particular research on it, but that is what we are hearing from them.

[89] **Julie Morgan:** Have any local authorities found it more difficult than others to implement the Measure?

[90] **Dr Llewelyn:** I mentioned earlier that it has been more challenging for authorities in rural areas, or sparsely populated areas where there are transport issues, and, in terms of Welsh-medium provision and bilingual provision, they probably found it more challenging than some of the other authority areas.

[91] **Mr Napieralla:** When major things like this are being introduced, we have a growing track record of partnership working between the Welsh Government and the WLGA and ADEW in particular. We were certainly promised co-construction in terms of things like the school effectiveness framework and the 14-19 learning pathways. One of the issues has perhaps been the lack of timeliness of the guidance and planning times, so initially it was a bit rushed, but as this develops, there are real opportunities evolving.

[92] **Julie Morgan:** So, the guidance was initially a bit late.

[93] **Mr Napieralla:** Yes.

[94] **Julie Morgan:** However, that has now been overcome.

[95] **Mr Napieralla:** Yes.

[96] **Julie Morgan:** So, the problems that now remain for local authorities are transport and Welsh-medium provision. Is there anything else?

[97] **Mr Napieralla:** There are some issues with rurality, and also the defensiveness of some sectors—

[98] **Julie Morgan:** That is what I was trying to get at—whether there were any other issues.

[99] **Mr Napieralla:** Those problems have not been eradicated. Generally, because we have had a real drive by the Welsh Government in terms of work-based learning and the basic level, if you have not reached a particular level, then you can forget it. For example, we have set up Skills Academy Wales and the companies that are involved in that in the local authority work-based learning areas have to reach quality level 2. We need more of that in the different sectors to ensure the quality. We need to eradicate the defensiveness of some sectors. It should not be tertiary versus sixth-form provision; it should be provision as appropriate, but at the same time, it should be based on quality and efficiency. If you look at Carmarthenshire, in one part of the county they have a very effective tertiary scenario, but they obviously have some successful sixth forms as well. However, even Carmarthenshire needs to look at eradicating duplication. A greater steer from Government on that is particularly important. After all, you guys control the purse strings, do you not?

[100] **Julie Morgan:** Not us personally. [*Laughter.*]

[101] **Dr Llewelyn:** Could I add to that? In terms of Karl's point about the resistance to collaboration and potential barriers, this is where the earlier point about the national planning and funding system comes in, and that is why I think the review is welcome—because it will help in breaking down those institutional barriers. The review of the qualifications framework and other ongoing developments will help. That said, the current funding climate does make things a bit more difficult. Transformation would have been aided so much had the 40 per cent cut in capital not taken place. A close alignment between transformation and the twenty-first century schools programme was needed because it is inevitable that the kind of transformational change that was envisaged requires significant revenue and capital funding, and given the wider economic circumstances, that has not been possible. There are increasing challenges and knock-on consequences from that wider context.

[102] **Christine Chapman:** I will bring Jocelyn Davies in now because we only have a few minutes.

[103] **Jocelyn Davies:** Could I just clear something up? I thought that you said earlier that the concerns around transport had not materialised, and yet in your answer to Julie Morgan you said that there was an issue with transport. So, perhaps you can think about that while I go on to question 11. We heard about choice earlier, so I wondered whether there was any evidence that the Measure had had an impact on improving young people's skill levels. We have certainly had evidence that those who you might expect to be disaffected are becoming engaged through greater choice. Have you seen a significant increase in skill levels or is there some evidence in terms of stay-on rates? Could you also say something about the more academic people or those who would be aiming for university and so on?

[104] **Dr Llewelyn:** I think that Karl has some evidence from Neath Port Talbot. With regard to the overall picture, on all of the points that you have raised, the feedback that we have had from the authorities and the 14-19 co-ordinators is very positive, in that it has had a beneficial impact on all those issues. I think that Karl has done some work in Neath Port Talbot on improved outcomes, and it is very encouraging.

[105] **Mr Napieralla:** On the issue of transport, I was reflecting on the situation in our area and the south-west. Co-ordinators were saying that it was an issue in 2008 and that it was going to be a big issue, but it has not materialised. However, I can see that, in other areas, the problem still has not been fully cracked.

[106] In terms of the skill levels, the evidence is very encouraging. We have a couple of case studies across the region. I will give you one example from the last cohort in our area. Some 92 per cent of 203 year 11 pupils in all collaborative courses supported by the learning network achieved higher than their predicted average GCSE threshold score, and many who were predicted fail grades passed the qualification. So, it has had a marked effect on level 1 and on the number of pupils who do not achieve any qualifications. Eighty per cent of pupils who studied level 2 courses are on their way to the learning pathway of their choice at key stage 5.

[107] In terms of vocational and academic provision, we have real evidence coming through in some vocational areas that, rather than going down the three A-level route, some young people are starting to turn their attention to vocational learning pathways, but not without checking whether that is going to be acceptable to higher education learning institutions. This demonstrates the effectiveness of the learning coach and it is where the careers advice comes in. Obviously, it can be quite disturbing if they have been really enthused, and they are on this learning pathway, but, at the end of it, they realise that their qualifications are not going to be recognised.

[108] **Keith Davies:** I do not think that transport is a problem. You talked about Carmarthen, and I know what is happening there. There is not a problem now, but they are worried about what will happen if there are funding cutbacks. I think it says in the Estyn report—and we will ask Estyn representatives about this later—that there is an unintended consequence. You talked about blocking, so pupils go for a morning or an afternoon, which eases the transport issues. However, the Estyn report says that, in schools, the timetables have had to be altered to deal with this. The example it gives is of a pupil having three English lessons in one day, and that is not good. I am just wondering about this. I had not realised until I read the Estyn report that there are consequences like that. I am glad to hear your answer to Jocelyn that achievement has increased. However, is a pattern like that developing? Are timetables being adjusted in a way that means that youngsters then have three or four lessons on the same subject in a day?

[109] **Mr Napieralla:** I would suggest, although I do not have the evidence, that that has come from an area where the planning is done piecemeal rather than in a truly collaborative way. Where there is really high-quality extensive curriculum planning across the network, those sorts of things are avoided. I can only speak for our area.

10.15 a.m.

[110] **Dr Llewelyn:** On a national level, that is not something that has been fed back or highlighted to us as a problem. However, that does not mean that that is not the case. Perhaps we could pursue that to see whether it is an issue.

[111] **Keith Davies:** It might be that Estyn is just making the comment.

[112] **Christine Chapman:** We can ask Estyn. I am going to draw this session to a close. Thank you, Karl and Chris, for attending this morning. We will send you a transcript of the meeting to check for factual accuracy. Thank you for attending. We will now have a short break, and I ask you to reconvene here just before 10.30 a.m.

*Gohiriwyd y cyfarfod rhwng 10.16 a.m. a 10.30 a.m.
The meeting adjourned between 10.16 a.m. and 10.30 a.m.*

Gweithredu Mesur Dysgu a Sgiliau (Cymru) 2009—Sesiwn Dystiolaeth Implementation of the Learning and Skills (Wales) Measure 2009—Evidence Session

[113] **Christine Chapman:** We will start our next session on the inquiry into the implementation of the Learning and Skills (Wales) Measure 2009. This morning, we will take evidence from Estyn, so I welcome Ann Keane, the Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales, and Meilyr Rowlands, strategic director. The Members will have read your papers, so are you happy for us to start off with questions from Members?

[114] **Ms Keane:** I have a short summary of the main points if you wish me to share those with you.

[115] **Christine Chapman:** Okay, yes.

[116] **Ms Keane:** Yr wyf wedi gwneud crynodeb o'r prif bwyntiau, gan ddechrau gyda'r effeithiau cadarnhaol ac wedyn y rhwystrau a'r heriau. Yn gyntaf, gallaf ddweud yn bendant fod y Mesur wedi
Ms Keane: I have prepared a summary of the main points, beginning with the positive impacts and then the barriers and the challenges. First, I can say without doubt that the Measure has succeeded in increasing the

llwyddo i gynyddu'r dewis ar gyfer pobl ifainc rhwng 14 ac 19 mlwydd oed. Er bod rhai ysgolion uwchradd dal heb gyrraedd y 30 cwrs gan gynnwys pum cwrs galwedigaethol, mae 88 y cant wedi cyrraedd hynny'n barod a chyn y dyddiad terfynol.

choice that is available to young people between the ages of 14 and 19. Although some secondary schools still have not reached the requirement of 30 courses including five vocational courses, 88 per cent have reached that already and have done so before the deadline.

[117] Ni allwn ddod i gasgliadau terfynol am yr effeithiau. Bydd yn rhaid inni aros tan 2012 cyn cadarnhau'r holl welliannau, ond bu cynnydd sylweddol yn nifer y cyrsiau ac mae effaith gadarnhaol yn y deilliannau. Yr ydym wedi nodi'r gwelliannau yn y papur o ran canlyniadau asesiadau allanol, ac nid wyf eisiau mynd drwy'r rheini eto. Mae mwy o fyfyrwyr yn parhau gyda'u haddysg, ond gall hynny fod yn ganlyniad i'r crebachu yn y farchnad swyddi. Mae rhywfaint o welliant wedi bod yn y cyfraddau presenoldeb, rhywfaint o leihad yn y nifer sydd yn cael eu heithrio o'r ysgol, ac mae patrymau cydweithio cadarn rhwng athrawon a rheolwyr ar draws sectorau, ac mae hynny yn effaith bwysig.

We cannot come to any final conclusions about the impacts. We will have to wait until 2012 before confirmation of all the improvements, but there has been a significant increase in the number of courses and there is a positive impact in the outcomes. We have noted the improvements in our paper in terms of the results of external assessments, and I will not go through them again. More students remain in education, but that could be as a result of the shrinkage in the jobs market. There has been some improvement in attendance rates, some reduction in the number of exclusions from school, and strong patterns of cross-sectoral collaboration between teachers and managers, and that is an important impact.

[118] O ran y rhwystrau a'r heriau, nid oes digon o amrywiaeth yn ystod y dewis a niferoedd y cyrsiau mewn nifer o fannau ar draws Cymru. Serch hynny, mae mwyafrif yr ysgolion cyfrwng Cymraeg yn cwrdd â'r galw yn llawn yn barod. Fodd bynnag, mae her arbennig iddynt wrth sicrhau arbenigedd galwedigaethol cyfrwng Cymraeg mewn rhai meysydd sydd efallai ddim ond ar gael mewn colegau addysg bellach neu drwy gyfrwng hyfforddiant yn y gweithle gan fod y cyfarpar ar gael, ond mae diffyg staff sy'n medru'r Gymraeg.

As to the barriers and challenges, there is not enough variety in the range of choices and the numbers of courses in various areas throughout Wales. Nonetheless, the majority of Welsh-medium schools already meet the demand in full. However, there is a particular challenge for them in ensuring vocational expertise through the medium of Welsh in certain areas that perhaps are only available in further education colleges or workplace training, because the equipment is available, but there is a lack of Welsh-speaking staff.

[119] Nid yw'n amlwg bod niferoedd y disgyblion sy'n dewis pynciau yn y dyniaethau yng nghyfnod allweddol 4 wedi disgyn o achos y dewisiadau newydd sydd ar gael yng nghyfnod allweddol 4, ond bu rhywfaint o golledion o ran y niferoedd sy'n dewis dilyn cyrsiau TGAU mewn ieithoedd modern yng nghyfnod allweddol 4. Mae'r niferoedd sy'n dilyn cwrs llawn Cymraeg ail iaith TGAU wedi disgyn hefyd.

It is not apparent that the numbers of students who choose humanities subjects in key stage 4 have fallen because of the new options available at key stage 4, but there have been some losses in terms of the numbers choosing to take GCSE courses in modern languages at key stage 4. The numbers taking a full GCSE course in Welsh as a second language have also fallen.

[120] Mae'r rhaglen i drawsnewid patrwm addysg 14-19 wedi symud yn gymharol araf, er ei bod yn well mewn rhai ardaloedd na'i gilydd. Nid wyf yn sôn am y patrwm

The transformation programme for 14-19 learning has moved relatively slowly, although it is better in certain areas than others. It is not the pattern of collaboration

cydweithio rhwng darparwyr fel y maent ar hyn o bryd, ond y patrwm o uno neu gau darpariaeth er mwyn codi darpariaeth well sy'n cynnig mwy o ddewis ac yn rhoi gwerth gwell am arian. Yr ydym yn poeni tipyn bach p'un ai yw'r trefniadau cydweithio presennol yn gynaliadwy i'r dyfodol wrth i'r grant leihau dros y blynyddoedd i ddod. Mae rhai cyrsiau galwedigaethol yn ddrud, ac yn sicr yn ddrutach na'r cyrsiau yn y pynciau academiaidd traddodiadol. Mae'n ddrutach i gynnig cwrs peirianeg, er enghraifft. Felly, wrth i'r nifer sydd yn dilyn cyrsiau galwedigaethol godi, her arall i reolwyr yw gwneud defnydd o'r athrawon lle mae llai o alw am eu harbenigedd yn yr ysgolion achos bod mwy o blant yn dewis mynd i sefydliadau eraill.

between the providers as they currently exist, but the pattern of merging or closing provision to build better provision that offers more choice and better value for money. We are a little concerned as to whether current collaboration arrangements are sustainable for the future as the grant shrinks over the years to come. Certain vocational courses are expensive, and they are certainly more expensive than the courses in the traditional academic subjects. It is more expensive to provide an engineering course, for example. So, as the numbers choosing vocational courses increase, managers face the challenge of making use of teachers where there is less demand for their expertise within schools, as a result of more children choosing to go to other institutions.

[121] Yr ydych wedi trafod, ac yr ydym wedi sôn, am drefniadau teithio yn barod sydd ambell waith yn gymhleth, ac mae trefnu amserlenni, gyda blocio'r cwricwlwm, yn gallu cael rhywfaint o effaith andwyol os nad oes cydweithio da. Yn y sefyllfa bresennol, mae rhywfaint o gystadlu am fyfyrwyr 16 oed, sy'n parhau'n nodwedd negyddol. Mae rhai ysgolion yn dal i gynnal dosbarthiadau bychan iawn yn y chweched dosbarth. Yn sir y Fflint, lle buom yn ddiweddar yn gwneud arolwg ardal, mae gan hanner yr ysgolion sydd â chweched dosbarth lai na phump o ddisgyblion yn y dosbarthiadau hynny. Yr yr adroddiad blynyddol eleni, byddwn yn dweud wrth arolygu ysgolion eleni eon bod wedi darganfod bod lleiafrif, ond lleiafrif sylweddol, â dosbarthiadau chweched dosbarth nad ydynt yn hyfyw.

You have discussed, and we have already mentioned, transport arrangements, which can be complex, and timetabling, with blocking the curriculum, can have a negative effect unless there is effective collaboration. In the current situation, there is some competition for students at the age of 16, which remains a negative aspect. Some schools maintain small classes in the sixth form. In Flintshire, where we recently carried out an area inspection, half of the schools with sixth forms have classes of fewer than five pupils. In our annual report this year, we will say that in inspecting schools this year, we have found that a minority, albeit a significant minority, have sixth-form classes that are not viable.

[122] **Christine Chapman:** Thank you for that helpful introduction, Ann. We will now delve deeper into some of the issues that you have raised. Suzy Davies has the first question.

[123] **Suzy Davies:** Thank you for that summary; it makes it easier for us to concentrate on specific questions for you. On the requirement of offering 30 courses, do you have any evidence that some courses in some parts of Wales are being offered simply as wallpaper and that there is no genuine intention that those courses will be run?

[124] **Ms Keane:** I can give you a general view on some things, even though we might not have done a very recent survey on them.

[125] **Suzy Davies:** Anecdotal evidence will be fine.

[126] **Ms Keane:** Okay. My impression is that that perhaps only applies in a small minority of providers. This is not a general issue.

[127] **Suzy Davies:** That is pleasing to hear. There is another thing that I want to ask you about choices. You spoke a little about unintended consequences, so can you think of particular subject areas where numbers have decreased? I am thinking of modern languages in particular. Has there been a particular effect there?

[128] **Ms Keane:** The only traditional subject that has seen a notable decline is modern foreign languages.

[129] **Suzy Davies:** What about Welsh as a second language?

[130] **Ms Keane:** The numbers have declined for Welsh as a second language for the full GCSE course. There may be other reasons for that decline, and there are variations in the entries for some of the subjects, although there is no pattern.

[131] **Suzy Davies:** So, it is not necessarily all down to timetable blocking?

[132] **Ms Keane:** No, the issue with blocking is that if you offer pupils options that mean that they have to travel somewhere, it is easier to do so for half days. Once you do that for one of your GCSE option choices, then it has a knock-on effect on how you organise the timetable for the rest of the school and for the other options. That is not a major issue, and I tend to agree that you can deal with that by having effective planning mechanisms to ensure that you do not get three language lessons, for example, straight after each other.

[133] **Suzy Davies:** I want to press you a little on blocking, because I noticed, rather worryingly, in your paper that one of the effects of travelling—and I am talking about the particular days that you talk about—on some learners is that they miss lessons in the learning core subjects.

[134] **Ms Keane:** That is where they have been taken out of school for, say, a half day, but the rest of the timetable is going on as normal. So, where the rest of the cohort who have not chosen an option that takes them out of the school would get an English, mathematics or a Welsh lesson on that day, they have missed lessons.

[135] **Suzy Davies:** Those, of course, are the real core subjects. What are schools—and I presume that this mainly affects schools—doing to redress that balance?

[136] **Ms Keane:** They try to deal with those pupils by giving them some support separately.

[137] **Suzy Davies:** Would it be the learning coach or someone else who would be giving that help?

[138] **Ms Keane:** The teachers of those subjects would have to plan that support.

[139] **Suzy Davies:** The issue with regard to business and management is another thing that worried me. You mentioned that of the vocational subjects—and there is a question about whether business and management counts as vocational—the take-up in business and management is not as good as it is in the other vocational areas.

[140] **Ms Keane:** That is because the offer is not as good.

[141] **Suzy Davies:** Is there an explanation for that?

[142] **Ms Keane:** Perhaps I should say something about the report that was published in

2010, which reflected the evidence that we gathered, roughly, in autumn 2009. We are now two years on. While some of the things in that report are still generally true, other things have moved on. On business administration, there are fewer courses and less progression. We have done surveys of 14-19 provision going back years; learning pathways were in place for a long time before the Measure was brought forward. We noticed initially that schools were offering level 1 courses in key stage 4, but without planning for progression to level 2 courses. That left those learners high and dry after a year or so, because schools had not collaborated with the local college and had not set up progression routes in their options system. We see much less of that now. Even in autumn 2009, we were seeing, by that stage, that schools were offering planned progression routes. That is important; otherwise, vocational level 1 courses are just a filler to keep them occupied for a year, and not a real vocational option. However, we are seeing that now. We do not have very recent data on the business studies courses, but my impression is that they have probably still not made up for lost ground.

[143] Schools also tend to offer the softer vocational options, because those do not require the extensive resources and workshop facilities that are needed for construction and engineering. They tend to offer courses such as health and social care or catering—although they would have to set up kitchens for that, which many schools have done. The issue in some schools that have provided facilities is that the related course is then the only option. If a school has set up a salon, for example, then the vocational option for girls at key stage 4 would be hairdressing and beauty, and then perhaps there are one or two vocational options for boys. So schools do not have the full range of options, and the children may not want to travel, and so the tendency is to opt for whatever is available in the school. It is a mixed picture.

[144] **Suzy Davies:** Thank you; that was very helpful.

[145] **Christine Chapman:** I have a number of Members who want to come in, but I want to pick up on what you said about boys' and girls' options. One of the aspirations for the original learning pathways was to challenge gender stereotyping. How far has that been achieved?

[146] **Ms Keane:** That is a very good question. Gender stereotyping is alive and well in FE colleges, and it has been for a long time. The same applies to vocational choices for key stage 4 pupils. It also applies to other subjects in the curriculum, to some extent. Girls tend to opt more for languages and the arts and boys for the sciences. However, it is not as pronounced in academic subjects and, of course, everyone has to study the core subjects. For vocational options, gender stereotyping is still fairly common.

[147] **Simon Thomas:** Wedi dweud hynny, mae fy mab yn astudio arlwyio drwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg, ac mae mwy o fechgyn na merched yn gwneud y cwrs hwnnw, felly mae rhyw fath o gam ymlaen yno o gymharu â 10 i 15 mlynedd yn ôl. Yr wyf eisiau deall pam y penderfynwyd ar ffigur o 30 o gyrsiau. Sut penderfynwyd ar y ffigur hwnnw? Mae toriadau'n anochel yn y maes hwn yn ystod y pedair blynedd nesaf. A fyddai hi'n effeithio'n andwyol ar y gwelliant a'r deilliannau yr oeddech wedi'u amlinellu pe byddai'r nifer o gyrsiau yn lleihau i 28 neu 27 neu beth bynnag? Beth sydd mor arbennig am y ffigur hwnnw o 30?

Simon Thomas: That said, my son studies catering through the medium of Welsh, and the majority of pupils in that class are boys not girls, so there has been some progress there compared with 10 or 15 years ago. I want to understand how the figure of 30 was arrived at. How was that figure decided upon? Cuts in this field are inevitable over the next four years. Will it have a detrimental effect on the improvement and the outcomes that you have outlined if the number of courses were to be reduced to 28 or 27 or whatever? What is so important about that figure of 30?

[148] **Ms Keane:** Nid oeddwn yn rhan o'r penderfyniad i osod isafswm o 30, ond mae'n rhaid gosod isafswm. Wrth edrych ar y dewisiadau sydd bellach ar gael ar gyfer disgyblion yng nghyfnod allweddol 4, mae ganddynt lawer yn fwy o ddewis a mwy o bethau sydd at ddant plant sydd wedi cael digon ar y fwydlen draddodiadol. Mae'n debygol bod y rheiny wedi dal ymlaen yn yr ysgol, neu wedi parhau gyda'u haddysg, oherwydd bod y fwydlen estynedig honno ar gael. Fel y dywedais yn gynharach, mae rhywun yn poeni o weld y grant yn disgyn, gan fod rhai o'r opsiynau ond yn gynaliadwy oherwydd bod y rhwydwaith yn talu'n ddrud am y opsiynau galwedigaethol hynny.

Ms Keane: We were not part of the decision to set a minimum of 30, but a minimum has to be set. Looking at the options now available for pupils at key stage 4, there is far more choice available to them and far more things that would be of interest to those children who have had enough of the traditional menu. It is likely that those pupils have stayed on in school, or have continued with their education, because that enhanced menu is available. As I said earlier, it is a concern to see the grant reducing, because some of the options are sustainable only because the network pays a high price for those vocational options.

10.45 a.m.

[149] Ar y cyfan, sut bynnag, mae cynyddu'r dewis wedi bod yn beth da. Un o'r pethau a fu'n poeni pobl oedd bod plant yn gadael yr ysgol yn gynnar gan nad oedd modd cynnal eu diddordeb yn y fwydlen, ond mae hyn wedi sicrhau bod dewisiadau ehangach ar eu cyfer.

On the whole, however, increasing choice has been a good thing. One thing that has been of concern in the past is that children left schools early because their interest in the menu could not be maintained, but this has ensured wider choice for them.

[150] **Simon Thomas:** Bu ichi sôn y byddech yn fwy cadarn o ran deilliannau yn 2012, pan fydd gennych fwy o adborth a thystiolaeth. A fydddech mewn sefyllfa fel arolygwyr wedyn i ddweud rhywbeth am rychwant a nifer y cyrsiau a pherthynas hynny â phobl yn aros mewn addysg a'r deilliannau addysgol a ddaw yn ei sgîl?

Simon Thomas: You mentioned that you will be more certain about outcomes in 2012, when you will have more feedback and evidence. Would you then be in a position as inspectors to say something about the range and number of courses and how that relates to people staying in education and the educational outcomes that follow that?

[151] **Ms Keane:** Yr wyf yn pryderu rhywfaint am roi arfarniad pendant i chi ar hyn o bryd. Yn un peth, nid ydym wedi cyrraedd 2012, ac, yn ail, mae'n hadroddiad diweddaraf yn sôn am dystiolaeth sydd wedi dyddio. Felly, byddwn yn gobeithio cynnal arolwg arall y flwyddyn nesaf er mwyn edrych i roi atebion i rai o'ch cwestiynau.

Ms Keane: I am a little concerned about giving you a definite evaluation at this time. For one thing, we have not yet reached 2012, and, for another, our most recent report refers to evidence that is dated. So, I would hope to carry out another inspection next year in order to look to provide answers to some of your questions.

[152] **Jocelyn Davies:** In your introductory remarks, I noted that you talked about small numbers in some sixth forms. You said that they were not viable. By that, do you mean not financially viable, and what number of pupils in a class would you describe as viable?

[153] **Ms Keane:** We have been using a number of five or under as not viable.

[154] **Jocelyn Davies:** Is that in relation to financial viability?

[155] **Ms Keane:** Well, there is a debate to be had there. I believe that students benefit from being in classes with more than five pupils, simply because of the range of opinions and

interactions—the dynamic, if you like—among the people in the class. If you have ever been a teacher, as I have been, and you have taught small classes, you will know that it is more difficult to sustain them, whereas larger classes bring more excitement, a greater challenge and more of a dynamic. So, I would say that there are some educational arguments for having larger classes. For one thing, it prepares pupils better, especially in the sixth form, for higher education, where they will meet hundreds or thousands of students, and they will have to cope with a very different environment. You will have had a sheltered experience if you have only ever been in small classes.

[156] **Mr Rowlands:** There is quite a debate, as you know, about what is a viable size for a sixth form class. Typically, people will say that it should be about 10 or 12, but we feel safe in saying that any class with fewer than five pupils is not viable. That is why we tend to use that in inspection reports.

[157] **Simon Thomas:** Group psychology suggests seven or eight people is necessary to get a group to work, does it not?

[158] **Jocelyn Davies:** Yes, to get the dynamic.

[159] **Aled Roberts:** Yr wyf innau am fynd ar ôl y pwynt hwnnw hefyd. Cafwyd tystiolaeth gan gyfarwyddwr Castell-nedd Port Talbot fod yr awdurdod yn herio ysgolion lle mae'n credu bod arian yn cael ei drosglwyddo o ddarpariaeth ar gyfer disgyblion o dan 16 oed er mwyn sybsideiddio'r dosbarthiadau bach hyn, i raddau. Pa mor llwyddiannus y mae'r sialens honno wrth feddwl bod gan ysgolion reolaeth lwyr ar eu cyllid?

Aled Roberts: I also want to go after that point. We had evidence from the director of Neath Port Talbot that the authority challenges schools where it thinks that money is being transferred from provision for pupils aged under 16 to subsidise these small classes, to an extent. How successful is that challenge considering that the schools have total control over their budgets?

[160] **Ms Keane:** Nid oes amheuaeth bod rhywfaint o sybsideiddio yn digwydd mewn ysgolion lle mae'r niferoedd yn fach ac mae niferoedd yn y chweched dosbarth yn isel. Felly, dywedwn i rai awdurdodau gael mwy o lwyddiant wrth herio—mae rhai, wrth gwrs, wedi mynd i'r afael â threfniadau mwy trydyddol na'i gilydd i godi'r baich a sicrhau nad yw cyfnod allweddol 3 yn dioddef ac nid oes rhaid cael ddosbarthiadau cyfnod allweddol 3 mwy eu maint er mwyn sybsideiddio'r chweched dosbarth. Mae'n haws yn y siroedd lle mae'r ddarpariaeth ôl-16 yn drydyddol beth bynnag.

Ms Keane: There is no doubt that some subsidising happens in schools where the numbers are small and the numbers in the sixth form are low. So, I would say that some authorities have had greater success in challenging—some, of course, have got to grips with arrangements that are more tertiary than others to alleviate that burden and ensure that key stage 3 does not suffer and that you do not have to have larger classes at key stage 3 in order to subsidise the sixth form. It is easier in those counties where the post-16 provision is tertiary anyway.

[161] **Aled Roberts:** Beth am y sefyllfa lle mae swyddogion yn dod ag achos gerbron cyngor i ddangos y dylid mynd i system drydyddol ond, oherwydd pwysau democrataidd, nid yw'r cynlluniau hynny'n cael eu derbyn gan yr aelodau? A ddylai'r Gweinidog wrthod y cynlluniau strategol sydd yn dod ger ei fron?

Aled Roberts: What about the situation where officials bring a case before the council to demonstrate that a tertiary system should be adopted, but, because of democratic pressures, those plans are not accepted by the members? Should the Minister reject the strategic plans that come before him?

[162] **Ms Keane:** Mae hwnnw'n gwestiwn gwleidyddol iawn, gan fod tensiynau rhwng yr hyn mae rhieni ei angen a'r hyn y bydd y plant yn dweud eu bod angen o ran cael dewis o aros mewn chweched dosbarth mewn ysgol.

Ms Keane: That is a very political question, as there are tensions between what the parents require and what the children say that they require in terms of having the choice to stay in a sixth form in school.

[163] O safbwynt hollol wrthrychol o ran edrych ar werth am arian, nid oes amheuaeth nad yw'r sefyllfa ar hyn o bryd mewn nifer o ardaloedd yn hyfyw o ran y dosbarthiadau bychan yr ydym yn eu gweld yn y chweched dosbarth. Felly, mae achos dros edrych ar sut i drefnu sefyllfa lle mae dosbarthiadau yn hyfyw. Nid oes yn rhaid cael trefniadau trydyddol mawr. Gall ysgolion, yn enwedig mewn dinasoedd neu drefi mawr, wneud mwy i gydweithio rhwng gwahanol chweched dosbarth er mwyn ateb y galw. Mae hanes o gydweithio gwell na'i gilydd mewn rhai ardaloedd.

From a completely objective viewpoint in terms of value for money, there is no doubt that the current situation in a number of areas is not viable in terms of the small classes that we see in sixth forms. There is, therefore, a case for looking at how to create a scenario in which classes are viable. You do not have to have large-scale tertiary arrangements. Schools, especially in large towns and cities, could do more to collaborate between different sixth forms to meet the demand. There is a history of better collaboration in some areas than in others.

[164] **Jenny Rathbone:** We heard evidence last week from UCAC that suggested that, because of the reduction in funding that is coming down the track, it might be possible to reduce the number of subjects to 25, while maintaining five vocational subjects. What is your view on to what extent that would limit the range of curriculum offer for students?

[165] **Ms Keane:** It would depend on the pattern of uptake and how the learners were being affected by that limiting of choice. You would have to look at that on a case-by-case basis, because, in effect, you would be removing some of the traditional choices in order to accommodate your five vocational choices. That would impact on a certain part of the cohort. You would need to be very careful in how you did that, and it would require an analysis of uptake patterns to justify any choices that would be made.

[166] **Christine Chapman:** I want to touch upon the eternal question about parity of esteem. Is the Measure helping to improve that?

[167] **Ms Keane:** This is also a very debatable area. Ultimately, many academic subjects are vocational choices. If you want to be an engineer at a high level, you need to take mathematics and physics at A-level. You are making vocational choices when you make any subject choices, as you are closing the door to some careers and opening the door to others. While universities prize A-levels above other qualifications pretty much universally and while HE admissions officers tend to look askance at some vocational qualifications, it will be very difficult to achieve parity of esteem between academic and vocational qualifications. I do not like the distinction, actually, because I see academic subject choices as being vocational career choices. Young people should understand that they are opening doors to certain possibilities and closing doors to others when they make subject choices.

[168] **Jenny Rathbone:** To what extent have learners benefitted from the increase in collaborative and partnership working between schools and colleges?

[169] **Ms Keane:** There have been significant benefits. They have been challenged to move outside their comfort zones, they have met other people and they have encountered different situations. There have been benefits for teachers in meeting teachers from other institutions and in managers working together. There have been significant benefits in terms of value for

money, increased choices and in the continued engagement of some learners who might have been more disengaged from a traditional curriculum.

[170] **Jenny Rathbone:** It was interesting to hear from a headteacher in Neath Port Talbot that they had managed to overcome the transport issues they thought that they would experience because of the extent of the planning and effective timetabling. To what extent has that been achieved in all local authorities? It appears to have been achieved in Neath Port Talbot, but is this proving to be a leadership challenge in many local authorities?

[171] **Ms Keane:** It is certainly a leadership challenge. We have been undertaking annual area inspections since before the learning pathways appeared. We have seen great improvements in collaboration, although there is not total collaboration. Very few schools engage with FE colleges in a formal governance or sharing arrangement, where everyone puts a pot of money on the table and then they start talking about how to divide it up. There have been big benefits. Initially, travel arrangements were more awkward and cumbersome, because people were finding that they were not terribly efficient when they started off. Increasingly, they have been moving college staff to school sites as opposed to moving pupils around and it has therefore become more efficient. However, there are still some issues to do with travel and block timetabling.

[172] **Christine Chapman:** On that point, we heard evidence last week from the teachers unions about the effects on staff. Obviously, if there is a bad effect on staff, it could affect their teaching skills. Have you any thoughts on that? You talked about teachers arriving and having to park the car and, therefore, perhaps missing some of the lesson. Had you picked up anything like that?

[173] **Ms Keane:** Yes. That is likely to be the case. Many secondary schools have split sites anyway, and staff have always had issues with regard to movement between sites. So, I have not encountered it as a big issue.

[174] **Simon Thomas:** Serch hynny, yr ydym yn gwybod bod toriadau ar y ffordd, ond mae toriadau penodol ym maes cefnogi trafniadaeth. A ydych wedi derbyn digon o dystiolaeth i ffurfio barn ynglŷn ag effaith posibl toriadau o'r fath?

Simon Thomas: Despite that, we know that cuts are on the way and that there will be particular cuts to the support available for transport. Have you received enough evidence to form an opinion on the possible effects of such cuts?

[175] **Ms Keane:** Nid wyf wedi edrych ar hynny yn ddigon manwl i ateb y cwestiwn hwnnw.

Ms Keane: I have not looked at that in enough detail to answer that question.

[176] **Simon Thomas:** A allwch ddweud bod y cynlluniau teithio presennol yn allweddol i ddarparu dewis?

Simon Thomas: Can you say that the current travel arrangements are vital in order to provide choice?

[177] **Ms Keane:** Gallaf, ar hyn o bryd. Bu inni edrych ar y sefyllfa yng Nghaerffili y llynedd ac yn Fflint o ran Coleg Glannau Dyfrdwy; mae'r gallu i deithio yn hanfodol er mwyn i hynny weithio.

Ms Keane: I can, at the moment. We looked at the situation in Caerphilly last year and in Flint in relation to Deeside College; the ability to travel is essential in order for that to work.

[178] **Jenny Rathbone:** I would like to pick up on the specific collaboration arrangements of faith schools. I was rather surprised to find that, in Cardiff, we have a separate partnership arrangement for faith schools as opposed to separate geographical partnerships. How are faith schools working in collaboration with other providers in their area?

[179] **Ms Keane:** It is my impression that faith schools are becoming more willing to join in with collaborative arrangements. From what I have heard, this is certainly the case in Merthyr and Neath Port Talbot. However, we have not looked at this systematically across Wales.

[180] **Aled Roberts:** A oes tystiolaeth bod gweithredu'r Mesur wedi gwella sgiliau pobl ifanc?

Aled Roberts: Is there evidence that enacting the Measure has improved young people's skills?

[181] **Ms Keane:** Mae gwelliannau wedi digwydd yn y deilliannau o ran canlyniadau'r asesiadau. Ers i'r Mesur gael ei weithredu ac ers i'r cymwysterau galwedigaethol gael eu cyfrif o fewn y dangosydd perfformiad ar gyfer lefel 2 dros y ddwy flynedd diwethaf, cafwyd gwelliant o chwe phwynt canran yn y deilliannau. Fodd bynnag, yr oedd tuedd o welliant o ran TGAU cyn i'r Mesur gael ei weithredu. Felly, mae'n anodd dweud.

Ms Keane: There have been improvements in the outcomes for the assessment results. Since the implementation of the Measure and since vocational qualifications have been counted within the performance indicator for level 2 over the past two years, there has been an improvement of six percentage points in the outcomes. However, there was a trend of improvement with regard to GCSEs before the Measure was implemented. Therefore, it is difficult to say.

[182] O ran gwybodaeth gyffredinol am y dystiolaeth sydd gennym, mae'n wir bod disgyblion yn dysgu sgiliau sy'n berthnasol i fyfwrwr gwaith. Mae'n bosibl iddynt symud ymlaen i astudio cyrsiau addysg bellach a thu hwnt oherwydd hynny.

With regard to general information about the evidence that we have, it is true that pupils are learning skills that are relevant to the world of work. It is possible for them to move on to courses in further education and beyond because of that.

11.00 a.m.

[183] **Aled Roberts:** Ar y pwynt hwnnw o ran sgiliau byd gwaith, hoffwn drafod y gostyngiad yn nifer y bobl ifanc sy'n astudio ieithoedd modern. Mae nifer o ddiwydiannau yn y gogledd-ddwyrain yn cwyno nad yw plant o Gymru yn gallu siarad ieithoedd modern, a bod hynny'n creu sefyllfa lle mae mwy o bobl ifanc o tu draw'r ffin yn dod i mewn oherwydd eu bod yn gallu siarad Ffrangeg neu Almaeneg. Yr wyf yn synnu bod y niferoedd yn parhau i ostwng yng Nghymru, gan fod tystiolaeth eu bod yn cynyddu yn yr Alban. A oes gennych unrhyw bryderon ynghylch y sefyllfa mewn perthynas ag ieithoedd modern?

Aled Roberts: On that point about skills for the workplace, I would like to discuss the reduction in the number of young people studying modern languages. A number of industries in north-east Wales complain that children from Wales are unable to speak modern languages, and that that leads to a situation whereby more young people from across the border come into the area because they can speak French or German. I am surprised that numbers are continuing to fall in Wales, because there is evidence that there is an increase in take-up in Scotland. Do you have any concerns about the position of modern languages?

[184] **Ms Keane:** Oes. Nid yw'n sefyllfa dderbyniol. Ar y llaw arall, os oes nifer o blant yn mynd i gael ychwaneg o ddewisiadau, rhaid iddynt ddewis llai o bynciau eraill. Felly, bydd yn dylanwadu yn rhywle ar rhai pynciau yn y cwricwlwm. Mae'n ymddangos bod ieithoedd modern yn digwydd bod yn fwy amhoblogaidd. Fodd

Ms Keane: Yes, I do. It is not an ideal situation. On the other hand, if large numbers of children are going to have enhanced options, they will have to choose a smaller number of other subjects. Therefore, it will have an impact somewhere in the curriculum. It happens to be the case that modern languages appear to be more unpopular.

bynag, yr wyf yn cytuno bod hyn yn dangos sut y gall pwnc academaidd fod yn gysylltiedig â dyfodol galwedigaethol pobl, gan fod ieithoedd modern yn bwysig i rai swyddi.

However, I agree that that shows how an academic subject can be linked to people's vocational future, because modern languages are important in some jobs.

[185] **Aled Roberts:** Mae gennyf fab sy'n 15 oed, ac am ryw reswm mae'n rhaid iddo astudio Ffrangeg gyda'i ddosbarth ar ôl ysgol. Nid wyf yn deall pam nad yw'r ysgol yn gweld y dylai astudio Ffrangeg neu Almaeneg fod yn rhan o'r amserlen graidd. A yw hynny'n dueddiad cyffredinol ar draws Cymru?

Aled Roberts: I have a 15-year-old son who, for some reason, has to study French with his class after school. I do not understand why the school does not see that studying French or German should be part of the core timetable. Is that a general trend across Wales?

[186] **Ms Keane:** Nid yw'n bwnc craidd: dyna pam.

Ms Keane: It is not a core subject: that is the reason for that.

[187] **Aled Roberts:** Yr wyf yn gwybod hynny, ond pam dewis astudio Ffrangeg ar ôl ysgol, yn hytrach na phwnc arall ar yr amserlen?

Aled Roberts: I know that, but why choose French as a subject to be studied after school, rather than another subject on the timetable?

[188] **Ms Keane:** Byddwn yn tybio oherwydd bod y niferoedd yn is.

Ms Keane: I would think that it is because take-up is lower.

[189] **Mr Rowlands:** Mae patrwm y niferoedd sy'n astudio ieithoedd modern yn disgyn yn mynd yn ôl dros gyfnod maith. Yr ydym yn poeni am hynny, a dyna pam y bu inni gyhoeddi adroddiad ar y mater hwn tua dwy flynedd yn ôl. Mae'r patrwm yn mynd yn ôl i gyfnod cyn y Mesur, felly nid wyf yn credu ei bod yn deg cysylltu'r gostyngiad mewn rhifau â'r Mesur. Mae'r hyn yr ydych yn ei ddweud am yr Alban yn ddiddorol, ond, yn sicr, mae'r un math o ostyngiad yn y niferoedd yn Lloegr hefyd—nid yw cynddrwg ag y mae yng Nghymru, ond mae patrwm o newidiadau cymdeithasol yr wyf yn credu sy'n gyfrifol am y gostyniad yn nifer y bobl sy'n dewis dysgu iaith arall. Yr wyf yn credu bod hynny'n gywir yn yr achos yr ydych yn sôn amdano. Mae rhai ysgolion yn cynnig pynciau gyda niferoedd isel iawn y tu allan i'r cwricwlwm arferol, a dyna sydd wedi digwydd fan hyn.

Mr Rowlands: The pattern of decline in the numbers studying modern languages goes back a long time. We are concerned about that, which is why we published a report on this about two years ago. The pattern goes back to the period before the Measure was introduced, so I do not think that it is fair to make a connection between the decline in numbers and the Measure. What you say about Scotland is interesting, but there is a similar decline in numbers in England—it is not as pronounced as it is in Wales, but there is a pattern of social changes that I think is responsible for the decline in the numbers choosing to learn another language. I think that that is true in the case that you mentioned. Some schools offer subjects with very low numbers outwith the usual curriculum, and that is what has happened here.

[190] **Ms Keane:** Mae dwy iaith yn orfodol yn barod, wrth gwrs.

Ms Keane: The study of two languages is already compulsory, of course.

[191] **Aled Roberts:** Mae hynny'n wahanol i Loegr.

Aled Roberts: That is not the case in England.

[192] **Christine Chapman:** We will now move to questions on funding.

[193] **Angela Burns:** Thank you for your papers. May I clarify one comment that you made in your opening statement? You said that, since the Estyn report of 2010, things have improved. In your subsequent update, you said that the main findings from the report still have currency. I wanted to ensure that we all understand that.

[194] I want to go on to another comment that you made in your opening statement, which has been borne out by the 2010 report and your update, regarding the long-term sustainability of these courses, particularly vocational courses and the issue, which you express clearly, of a lot of smaller sixth-forms being unwilling to collaborate with further education institutions and other schools, because they are worried about the leakage of pupils and the drain on their financial resources. Will you expand on that, please?

[195] **Ms Keane:** There is the funding that schools and colleges get through the funding system in revenue funding, and there is the grant funding. It is fair to say that we are worried about the sustainability of courses, including small vocational courses, when that funding is reduced. All the network reports suggest that they would not be able to sustain the range of choice in the future without that funding. At 16, schools get funding based on capitation—how many pupils they have. There is still a tendency to want to retain pupils in the sixth form, so open evenings probably still emphasise a lot of what the school has to offer. I do not know to what extent it is still true now, but it was the case that some open evenings excluded the local FE college from giving advice. I would not be able to give you a totally up-to-date view of that.

[196] However, it is certainly true that it is a natural tendency for schools to want to retain their staff and, therefore, want to keep the numbers up and keep the pupils in school. That is probably one reason why we have very small numbers in some sixth-form classes. They would fear, naturally, that if they did not offer as many options—some FE colleges offer very big ranges of options; Yale and Gorseinon colleges had options in post-16 A-level courses of around 50 and 48 courses respectively—they could not compete. So, that is why they put on the very small courses: they want students to stay there and take all their A-level options at the school.

[197] **Keith Davies:** Yn dilyn yr hyn a ddywedoch am ysgolion yn gwrthod rhoi'r cyfleoedd sydd yn y colegau, yr wyf yn ddigon hen i gofio addysg dechnegol a galwedigaethol; bryd hynny, yr oedd pawb yn gorfod cydweithio—yr ysgolion a'r colegau. Cyn cael cyllid, yr oedd rhaid i'r rhwydwaith gynhyrchu llyfryn bach i bob disgybl 15 oed er mwyn iddynt weld y cyrsiau a oedd ar gael ym mhob ysgol a choleg. Oni ddylai'r Gweinidog ddweud, os ydych eisiau rhwydweithio, ac eisiau'r cyllid, un amod yw bod plant 15 oed yn cael dewis yr holl gyrsiau sydd yn y rhwydwaith?

Keith Davies: Following on from what you were saying about schools refusing to offer the same opportunities as colleges, I am old enough to remember technical and vocational education; at that time, everyone had to collaborate—schools and colleges. Before receiving funding, the network had to produce a booklet for each 15-year-old pupil so that they could see the courses that were available in every school and college. Should the Minister not say, if you want to form networks, and you want the funding, one condition is that pupils of 15 years of age have the choice of all courses within the network?

[198] **Ms Keane:** Byddai'n dda os byddem yn siŵr bod hynny'n digwydd o hyd. Yn ein hadroddiad ar ddewisiadau yn 2009, dywedasom nad oedd cynlluniau cydweithio ar gyfer ôl 16 ar gael ym mhob man. Erbyn hyn, yr wyf yn siŵr bod mwy ohonynt, felly

Ms Keane: It would be excellent if we could ensure that that always happened. In our 2009 report on options, we said that no collaboration arrangements were available for post 16 in all areas. I am sure that there are now much more of them, so I would not like

ni fyddem yn hoffi collfarnu'r holl awdurdodau gan nad wyf yn siŵr beth yw'r sefyllfa ar hyn o bryd. Yr wyf yn credu bod pethau wedi gwella, a byddai cael mecanwaith i sicrhau bod disgyblion i gyd yn cael y wybodaeth lawn yn ddefnyddiol.

to be too critical of the authorities, because I am not sure what the situation is at present. I believe that there has been an improvement, but having a mechanism to ensure that all pupils receive a full range of information would be very useful.

[199] **Mr Rowlands:** Yr wyf yn siŵr bod y mwyafrif llethol o blant yn cael y dewisiadau yn ffurfiol, ond mae ysgolion yn gallu dylanwadu ar blant, ac yn gwneud hynny am y rhesymau gorau, mae'n siŵr. Maent yn teimlo bod plant yn cael dilyniant yn eu haddysg ac yn y blaen, ac maent yn hyrwyddo manteision aros yn yr ysgol am y rhesymau gorau. Fodd bynnag, effaith hynny yw bod llai o debygolrwydd bod y plant hyn yn dewis mynd i astudio mewn sefydliad gwahanol.

Mr Rowlands: I am sure that the vast majority of pupils formally receive those options, but schools can influence children, probably with the best of intentions. They feel that children get continuity of education and so on, and promote the benefits of staying in school for the best reasons. However, the impact is that it is less likely that these children choose to go to another institution to study.

[200] **Angela Burns:** I wanted to finish off on the funding. We are in difficult times, so funding is not going to come whizzing along. What do you think we could do to mitigate it in the 14-19 pathways scenario?

[201] **Ms Keane:** It would certainly be worth looking at the benefits of the different patterns of options that have been offered in the different networks, and to look at what the greatest benefit to the largest number has been from the different configuration of options and how they are offered. I would think that some research based on the greatest benefit to the greatest number in current arrangements would help in coming to a decision about how to rationalise that arrangement. Of course, we are talking mainly in terms of collaboration in existing institutions. There is another agenda running, and that agenda is transformation. Sometimes, the existing arrangements for collaboration take no account of the potential to change everything in that agenda. I am not sure how much the progress of that agenda will be constrained by the position in relation to resource.

[202] **Christine Chapman:** I am conscious that we have just over five minutes left and there are other areas that we need to cover. Keith, did you want to talk about Welsh-medium education?

[203] **Keith Davies:** I have a particular reason for asking this and Angela will appreciate the question that I am now going to ask.

[204] Dywedoch ar y dechrau bod anawsterau mewn ambell ardal, yn enwedig o safbwynt addysg cyfrwng Cymraeg, a fydd yn ei gwneud yn anodd i bob plentyn gael dewis o 30 o gyrsiau. Mae un sefyllfa yn arbennig yn anos na phob sefyllfa arall. Sut mae ysgolion dwy ffrwd yn ymdopi o ran cynnig 30 o gyrsiau drwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg a 30 o gyrsiau drwy gyfrwng y Saesneg? Mae'r ysgolion hynny'n gofod cynnig 60 o gyrsiau.

You said at the beginning that there are difficulties in some areas, especially in terms of Welsh-medium education, which makes it difficult for every child to have a choice of 30 subjects. There is one particular situation that is more difficult than any other. How are schools with two streams coping in offering 30 subjects through the medium of Welsh and 30 subjects in English? Those schools have to offer 60 subjects.

[205] **Ms Keane:** Mae'r her dipyn yn **Ms Keane:** The challenges are a lot more

waeth iddynt. Rhaid cofio, beth bynnag yw eu trefniadau ar hyn o bryd ar gyfer y pynciau academiaidd, gall y trefniadau hynny barhau. Hynny yw, os ydynt wedi ymdopi â chysiau academiaidd eisoes bydd hynny yn parhau. Ni fydd modd iddynt ymdopi heblaw eu bod yn ystyried dysgu o bell a rhwydweithio drwy gyfrifiaduron a'r rhyngwyd gydag ysgolion a cholegau lleol. Mae rhai ysgolion yn ystyried hynny ar hyn o bryd. Dyna'r ffordd ymlaen. Sonioch am ADAG, a dyna oedd yn digwydd yn ADAG. Yr oedd canolfan ADAG ac yr wyf yn cofio arolygu rhai o'r cyrsiau. Yr oedd disgyblion o wahanol ysgolion yn y chweched dosbarth yn cyfathrebu â'i gilydd ar y bwrdd gwyn rhyngweithiol. Yr oeddynt o flaen eu hamser, mewn ffordd. Yr oedd yn gweithio yn dda iawn. Bùm yn gwneud arolwg manwl o'r trefniadau yn sir Fôn a'r ganolfan yn Llangefni. Yr oedd cyrsiau yng nghyfnod allweddol 4 yn cael eu hybu drwy gyfathrebu ar y bwrdd gwyn. Felly, er bod angen athro yn bresennol gyda dosbarthiadau cyfnod allweddol 4, mae tipyn mwy y gallwn wneud. Yr oedd ADAG yn enghraifft arbennig o dda o hynny.

pronounced for them. We must bear in mind that whatever their arrangements are at present for the academic subjects, those arrangements can continue. That is, if they have coped with academic subjects in the past, those will be maintained. They will not be able to cope unless they consider distance learning and using ICT and the internet to network with other schools and local colleges. Some schools are considering that at the moment. That is the way forward. You mentioned ADAG, and that is what happened in ADAG. There was an ADAG centre and I remember inspecting some of the courses. Sixth-form pupils from various schools would communicate through the interactive whiteboard. They were ahead of their time, in a way. It worked very well. I carried out a detailed inspection of arrangements in Anglesey and the centre in Llangefni. There were also courses at key stage 4 that were promoted through communication via whiteboards. Therefore, although you will need a teacher in attendance in key stage 4 classes, there is a lot more that can be done. ADAG was an exemplar in that case.

[206] **Christine Chapman:** Julie has a question on learning coaches and learning support.

[207] **Julie Morgan:** How is the learning support being delivered throughout Wales? Can you make any comments on that? The previous committee had concerns about how pupils with additional learning needs would take advantage of the opportunities. Can you address those issues?

[208] **Ms Keane:** The support for pupils with additional learning needs has improved. The range of courses has expanded at entry level and level 1, which are ideal for those pupils. In relation to the learning coaches, I have to admit that we have not done a formal survey of the work of the learning coaches. So, I would not like to give you a definitive account of the Estyn view of learning coaches across Wales. However, I can say, based on the inspections of individual schools, that we do see the impact of their support as a positive feature.

[209] **Christine Chapman:** What would you say is the role of a learning coach? Different people may deliver it, but what would you say is the definition of a learning coach?

[210] **Ms Keane:** A learning coach gives pupils guidance on the choices they make and, in understanding the potential within those children, gives them direct support, particularly children with additional learning needs. So, the fact that we have not done a survey means that what I am telling you now is my general impression from what comes through on the individual inspection reports. I would not like to say that that was our definitive view.

[211] **Julie Morgan:** Do you plan to do a survey because it seems to be a very important element and it could be crucial for individual pupils? Do you intend to do a survey to see how they are working out?

[212] **Ms Keane:** We will put it on the next list of remit reports that we could undertake in the future. It depends, however, because we negotiate that list with the Welsh Government. We certainly think that their role is important. We have a generally positive impression of the work that they have done in some areas. However, we need to do a survey to come to a conclusion.

11.15 a.m.

[213] **Julie Morgan:** The evidence has appeared—[*Inaudible.*]—that we have received in the committee so far.

[214] **Mr Rowlands:** When we discussed this with the Government, the feeling was that it was preferable for us to spend time looking at the curricular arrangements. So, all the 14-19 reports that we have produced have focused on that side, and not on the support and guidance side, because it was not as well developed and it was not timely. Perhaps the Government will now feel that it is timely to report on that area. We recognise the confusion and lack of clarity that exists about the role of the learning coach. That does not mean that individual learning coaches are not doing good work in different places, but we have not been able to look at it in detail. That is something that we can negotiate with the Government about doing in future.

[215] **Ms Keane:** It is a matter for the ministerial remit to Estyn.

[216] **Jocelyn Davies:** It seems as if there is a difference of opinion. There is a belief that if the learning coach is independent of the school—not a teacher at the school—his or her role could be more effective and have a significant impact on the children; however, if the learning coach is a member of school staff—I am sure that the teaching unions warned us about this—he or she will be given other roles, which cause confusion, and so they may not effectively deliver the learning coach support that students benefit so greatly from. That is the confusion. The flexibility that is allowed could mean that the original role is lost and diluted by the other things that they are expected to do.

[217] **Ms Keane:** That may be the case, but I cannot really comment on that.

[218] **Christine Chapman:** We have talked about careers guidance—surely there are careers advisers and teachers in place. However, I have always thought that the learning coaches should work one-to-one, where possible, with the young people to identify what areas of learning they are having difficulties with, so that they can act as an advocate with the teaching staff if there are problems. It is about more than giving guidance, because that is the role of Careers Wales, for example. It is something that we need to look at, because there is a lot of confusion out there.

[219] **Keith Davies:** With the Welsh baccalaureate, you have to have a personal tutor. That personal tutor has to see individual children at least once every half term to keep them on track and to support them with their development. One school in the Rhondda—I will not name it—when it started delivering the Welsh baccalaureate, did not use any teachers from within the school, but brought outside people in. That did not work, because they did not know the children and they were not a part of the school. For that reason, other schools and colleges delivering the Welsh baccalaureate took the more traditional approach of having members of the school or college staff as personal tutors.

[220] **Jocelyn Davies:** I am just quoting that from the evidence of the teacher unions.

[221] **Simon Thomas:** Yr ydym wedi derbyn tystiolaeth wahanol oddi wrth Gastell-nedd Port Talbot y bore yma, yn awgrymu **Simon Thomas:** We have received different evidence from Neath Port Talbot this morning, suggesting a different arrangement,

rhywbeth gwahanol, fel yr amlinellodd Keith. Efallai na fydd modd cael ateb llawn yn awr, ond efallai y bydd modd cael mwy o wybodaeth. Yr ydych wedi dweud yn eich tystiolaeth bod diffyg cyngor diduedd ar gyfer disgyblion yn y cyfnod allweddol hwn. Mae'n amlwg bod posibilrwydd y gall pethau syrthio rhwng dwy stôl, rhwng yr hyfforddwyd dysgu newydd sydd wedi meithrin rôl ymgynghorol ynglŷn â dewisiadau—nad oedd pawb yn ei ddisgwyl, o bosibl—a'r gwasanaeth gyrfaoedd, sydd eisoes yn ei le, ond sy'n wynebu toriadau dros y cyfnod i ddod ac sy'n poeni ynghylch pa fath o ddarpariaeth y gall ei gynnig. Yr wyf am danlinellu bod hwn yn faes hanfodol o bwysig er mwyn i bobl wneud y dewis gorau o'r rhychwant o bynciau sydd ar gael. A oes gennych unrhyw sylwadau i'w gwneud yn awr, neu a fyddwch yn edrych ar hwn i'n helpu i fireinio a pherffeithio'r system dros y cyfnod nesaf?

[222] **Ms Keane:** Mae nifer o bobl wahanol ynghlwm â'r broses o roi cyngor i ddisgyblion ar ddewisiadau ac ar y gwaith yn gyffredinol. Mae athrawon ysgol ac athrawon gyrfaoedd, ac mae staff y gwasanaeth gyrfaoedd a'r hyfforddwyd—

[223] **Simon Thomas:** A'r rhieni.

[224] **Ms Keane:** Ie, yn bendant. Felly, mae nifer o bobl ynghlwm wrth y broses. Ar hyn o bryd, mae Llywodraeth Cymru yn edrych ar rôl y gwasanaeth gyrfaoedd. Byddai'n dda o beth i edrych nid yn unig ar y gwasanaeth gyrfaoedd, ond ar roliau'r gwahanol bobl hyn yn y broses hefyd. I'r disgybl, mae'n broses—mae'n clywed y gwahanol bethau hyn. Tybiwn i, o ran edrych ar y gwasanaeth cyflawn a roddwn i ddisgyblion, mae angen gweld y rolau hynny fel rhywbeth cyflawn.

[225] **Christine Chapman:** I thank both of you for providing the evidence and for coming here today. I think that we have had an excellent session. We will send you a transcript of the meeting for you to check for factual accuracy. Thank you both.

11.21 a.m.

as Keith outlined. You may not be able to answer in full now, but perhaps you could give additional information. You say in your evidence that there is a lack of impartial advice for pupils in this key stage. It is evident that there is a possibility that things could fall between two stools, between the new learning coaches who have fostered an advisory role on options—a role that people may not have expected—and the careers service, which is already in place, but which is facing cuts in the next few years and is concerned about what kind of provision it will be able to offer. I want to underline that this is an area of crucial importance if people are to make the best choices from the range of options available. Do you have any comments to make now, or will you look at this to help us to finesse and perfect the system for the coming period?

Ms Keane: A number of different people are involved in the process of providing advice to pupils on their options and on their work in general. There are school teachers and careers teachers, and careers service staff and coaches—

Simon Thomas: And parents.

Ms Keane: Yes, definitely. So, there are a number of people involved in the process. The Welsh Government is currently looking at the role of the careers service. It would be a positive thing to look at not only the careers service, but the roles of these various people in the process as well. To the pupil, it is a process—they hear these different things. I would have thought that in looking at the service that we provide to pupils in its entirety, we need to see those roles in totality.

Cynnig o dan Reol Sefydlog Rhif 17.42 i Benderfynu Gwahardd y Cyhoedd
Motion under Standing Order No. 17.42 to Resolve to Exclude the Public

[226] **Christine Chapman:** To allow the committee to discuss matters relating to possible future inquiries under item 5 on the agenda, I move that

the committee resolves to exclude the public from the remainder of the meeting in accordance with Standing Order No. 17.42(ix).

[227] I see that we are all in agreement.

Derbyniwyd y cynnig.
Motion agreed.

Daeth rhan gyhoeddus y cyfarfod i ben am 11.21 a.m.
The public part of the meeting ended at 11.21 a.m.