

## Paper 1: Inquiry into Attendance and Behaviour

The purpose of this paper is to make some specific comments on the issues referred to on attendance and behaviour sent to me in your briefing document. In this paper, I will address each of these issues in turn and in the same order. Subsequently, I will submit some additional papers on my reflections on the National Behaviour and Attendance Review (NBAR) and follow up activity in the field.

### TEACHER TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT, IN-SERVICE and PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Initial teacher training is notoriously poor at providing new teachers with the skills they require for managing both behaviour and attendance. In fact, on school attendance, most trainees receive no induction in this area apart from any practical tips which they may pick up whilst on teaching practice. This is and always has been a weakness in existing ITT provision.

On behaviour management, some trainees receive more help than others. Many ITT providers do not have a behaviour management specialist on their staff. Some use part-time provision whilst others rely on occasional inputs. This applies both to primary and secondary trainees. For most trainees this amounts to less than ten hours duration throughout the range of their PGCE or BA (ED) programmes, despite the trainees' vast areas of need. Moreover, some of the so-called 'information' provided to trainees on behaviour management is of dubious quality and usefulness. This is one of the longstanding weaknesses of ITT provision as most newly qualified teachers (NQT's) tend to learn 'on-the-job' through experience gained whilst in full-time employment. This has long been one of the prime arguments used by some protagonists for more school-based training.

The evidence-gathering exercises undertaken by the NBAR team on visits throughout Wales, which involved in gathering the views and experiences of all kinds of teaching and caring professionals from every grade and position, found that a lack of training on behaviour management was their number one concern. This applied universally from the grass roots (eg teaching assistants) right up to head teacher level. This detailed evidence was presented in full in the NBAR Interim Report. Consequently, one of the core recommendations of the NBAR Report (2008, page 11) was that: "The Welsh Assembly Government should prioritise and increase funding significantly for training programmes on behaviour and attendance not only for school-based staff but for all those professionals and local authority staff engaged in promoting positive behaviour and improving attendance, more especially the education welfare/education social work staff."

This was also the main thrust and outcome of the earlier Report carried out and produced jointly by the NFER (Wales) and myself into the Role and Effectiveness of the Education Welfare Service in Wales,(2007, Swansea, SYCA)for the Welsh Assembly Government (see also: Reid, K, Powell, R, Smith, R, Reakes, A and Jones, G (2008) The initial qualifications, induction and in-service needs of education social workers in Wales, *Social Work Education*, 27,7,777-796 and Reid, K, Smith, R, Powell, R, Reakes, A and Jones, G (2007) An evaluation of the effectiveness of the education welfare service in Wales, *Research in Education*, 77,108-128).

Despite this, progress on implementing the NBAR recommendation on providing appropriate training for all staff engaged in behavioural and school attendance work has been painfully slow and disappointing. In fact, almost five years later, most staff in Wales remain in a similar position to the

one outlined in both the NBAR (2008) final and Interim (2007) Reports and in the SYCA (2007) evidence. (see: Reid, K (2011a) The professional development needs of staff in Wales on behaviour management and attendance, *Educational Studies*, 37, 1, 15-30; and, Reid, K (2011b) Tackling behaviour and attendance issues in schools in Wales: implications for training and professional development, *educational Studies*, 37, 1, 31-48).

Although the recommendation was warmly welcome by the Welsh Government (WG), plans to implement more and better training in behaviour management and school attendance have not been fulfilled to date. Why? This has been due to several interlocking factors:

First, prior to 2008, funding for in-service in Wales was prioritised and carried out differently between Wales and England and most UDE's did not receive any direct funding from the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW). Unlike in England, Scotland and Northern Ireland, neither behaviour management nor school attendance were perceived to be priority areas. Whereas in England for example, all UDE's were given direct priority funding in these fields and, post 1997, a system was introduced by the Blair Administration of introducing a national structure of training for both schools and LA staff in behaviour management at a national, regional and local level, no such equivalent system came into being in Wales, despite intense lobbying amongst teaching groups.

Moreover, despite accepting the NBAR recommendation in the formal response by the Welsh Government, *Behaving and Attending* (the Action Plan Responding to the National Behaviour and Attendance Review (WG, 2009, see pages: 31-32) and prioritising this recommendation in a special paper included in this document (see pages 38-48), progress towards meeting this aim has been both painfully slow and chequered (see Document 2).

Second, after a gap of almost five years, a start has been made as both attendance and behaviour management will be included as core elements in the WG's new interactive master's degree training programme for NQT's. However, this is a tip of the iceberg situation as, despite internal reviews conducted by the DfES into the in-service training needs of teachers, and their behaviour and attendance requirements, no properly structured and funded national training programmes on behaviour management or school attendance for head teachers, deputies, senior staff, middle managers, form tutors and classroom teachers at secondary, primary school, special school or for out-of-school providers, amongst others, have yet been formally introduced. This remains the case despite a range of assurances given at various times, including a statement from a former Minister. For example, whereas head teachers and aspirant head teachers in England are given this provision through their National School Leadership Programmes based in Nottingham, no such provision exists in Wales and most head teachers and their staff continue to learn 'on -the -job.'

Third, this means that some staff in schools have received a little more than some elements of ad hoc training on behaviour management and school attendance. Some have received a little bit more than others. Some have received virtually none. Generally speaking, most primary staff and secondary staff in Wales have received very little training at all on these issues, including many very senior and experienced staff; in marked contrast to their peers in other countries. Staff in primary schools have tended to fare particularly badly, despite the vast area of needs outlined in the NBAR Interim Report (2007) which certainly does not help the case with either earlier intervention or the WG's thrust in attempting to raise standards.

Last year, at the request of the Director of Education for Torfaen, following a successful intervention strategy led by myself, it was possible to improve the LA's league table position on attendance from second bottom to third top within twelve months by rewriting all policy and practice documentation, making new appointments within the EWS, and training key staff in all primary and secondary schools, school governors, LA staff, social workers, the police and related services. Similar interventions have led to equal success in a range of different LA's in England as outlined in one of my latest books, *Managing School Attendance* (Reid, 2013a), shortly to be published by Routledge.

#### PROVISION TO PUPILS EDUCATED OTHERWISE THAN IN SCHOOL (EOTAS)

The position in Wales on EOTAS is extremely complicated. As a whole, the country suffers from an acute shortage of EOTAS provision and such provision which currently exists is both disparate and uneven with, as ESTYN has recognised, considerable improvements needed. The management, existing funding regimes and the training of staff engaged in EOTAS provision are other core issues. Wales suffers considerably from a distinct lack of alternative curriculum and 'second chance' schools meaning that both managed moves and unofficial exclusions are more prominent issues in Wales than elsewhere, although, generally speaking, both the management and outcomes of pupil referral units in England is extremely variable (see: Reid, K, 2007, *An evaluation of reports on the attendance of pupils in out-of-school provision*, *International Journal of Educational Management*, 21, 2, 144-157). Consequently, in some parts of Wales, certain schools are used frequently to re-locate difficult or challenging pupils making their own opportunities for upward mobility in national performance league tables even more difficult.

This position often gives head teachers and their schools and LA's in Wales fewer options than those which are available in other parts of the UK (eg Sefton and Leeds). Conwy is probably the leading authority in this field in Wales. Some other LA's in Wales have little or no alternative provision for a wide variety of reasons, despite clear needs. A review into this provision in Wales has recently been undertaken by an Edinburgh-based team.

#### USE of EXCLUSION

The use of exclusion (including permanent/fixed-term and illegal exclusions) was fully covered in the NBAR Report (2008, see pages 87-94, amongst others) but perhaps surprisingly, received comparatively little coverage in *Behaving and Attending* (2009) and in subsequent WG publications. The issues of both exclusions and unofficial exclusions, as well as the way managed moves are currently utilised and implemented by LA's throughout Wales, commanded much attention and focus within the NBAR deliberations.

After considerable thought, the NBAR team made a series of core recommendations. These were:

- 1) "The Welsh Government should ensure that all schools and local authorities rigorously adhere to Circular 1/2004 on 'Exclusion from schools and Pupil Referral Units' with particular regard to tackling unofficial (illegal) exclusions."
- 2) "The Welsh Government should introduce legislation on new exclusion regulations in Wales.
  - a) For fixed-term exclusions of under 10 days:  
Schools should be required to immediately provide the fixed-term excluded pupil with a learning programme, which maintains curriculum continuity for the individual.

- b) For fixed-term exclusions of more than 10 days:  
In order to maintain curriculum continuity schools should be required to provide adequate learning, undertake marking and provide feedback on work completed. Schools should have a duty to convene a meeting within 10 days in order to determine the young person's needs, to plan to meet them and to act together in an inter-agency approach to attempt to prevent permanent exclusion."
- 3) "For permanent exclusions:  
Local authorities should be required to make 25 hours of appropriate or equivalent learning available (at KS4) to commence within 10 days of the permanent exclusion and to convene a meeting of all key professionals and agencies involved in the pupil's life within the ten day period."
- 4) "The Welsh Government should consider:
  - a) Giving parents and pupils the opportunity to access an advocacy support service similar to that provided to those with SEN in the event of permanent exclusion or where there is a threat of permanent exclusion.
  - b) Putting into place an additional national point of appeal following the independent appeal panel. The national panel will be overseen by the Welsh Government and this should include head teacher representatives to test whether this brings greater objectivity in a more neutral setting."

In addition, the NBAR Report recommended:

- 5) "The Welsh Government should introduce guidance on the use of managed moves and transfers as an alternative to exclusion. This protocol should include guidance on:
  - a) The removal of pupils from school sites;
  - b) Pupils' rights;
  - c) Promoting positive behaviour and early intervention;
  - d) The role of the head teacher;
  - e) Funding arrangements for managed moves;
  - f) The wishes of the young person and those of parents."
- 6) "The Welsh Government should actively follow-up schools who are excluding pupils at a rate which is significantly higher than average. This situation should be closely monitored by local authorities."
- 7) "All local authorities in Wales should designate an officer responsible for inclusion who should be appropriately experienced. Some authorities may wish to collaborate with neighbouring local authorities on this matter. The inclusion officer would be the central point of contact for tracking all exclusion queries and practice. The post should be at a senior level in order to drive multi-agency approaches and to be able to liaise with parents, head teachers, governors and other involved parties."

It was intended by the NBAR team, and in the preliminary discussions with the then Minister for Education and Skills, that aspects of the NBAR recommendations and these recommendations on exclusion practice, would be considered for inclusion in future Welsh legislation. To the best of my knowledge this has not happened to date.

EDUCATION WELFARE SERVICE

It is difficult within a short space to deliberate on the complex position of the education welfare service/social work service in the UK. A detailed scenario on the differences between the role and nature of the education welfare service between Wales and England can be found in one of my papers (Reid, K, 2008, The Education Welfare Service: the case for a review in England, Educational Studies, 34,3,175-189).

Since then however, further changes in both countries have taken place partly because of the Children Act (2004) agenda and the spending 'cuts' which I would be happy to elaborate upon further at the Inquiry. All these issues are fully explored in my two forthcoming new books (see: Reid, K (2013a) Managing School Attendance: Successful Intervention Strategies in Reducing Truancy and Reid, K (2013b) A Practical Guide to Improving School Attendance: Whole-School Strategies that Really Work, both to be published by Routledge).

Broadly speaking, you may wish to be made aware of the following:

- a) Most EWO's in South Wales remain unqualified. In North Wales, most ESW's are professionally qualified. However, some LA's in Wales contain both qualified and unqualified staff.
- b) Numbers of EWO's/ESW's in Wales (or their equivalents) tend to be significantly lower in Wales than in England. In some parts of Wales their numbers continue to fall despite national problems on school attendance. The EWS service in Wales originally contracted sharply following the Thatcher era cuts as the service was politically weak and it was a relatively simple 'cut' to make. It may or may not be a coincidence that unauthorised absence rates have risen sharply by comparison with England since then and, in some LA's, are two, three or four times higher.
- c) Pay grades, responsibilities, and EWS/ESW numbers vary from authority to authority across Wales. There are no official national guidelines.
- d) Some authorities in Wales (eg Cardiff), like England, have now started to introduce school attendance officers rather than appointing more or new EWS.
- e) Northern Ireland has bucked the overall UK trend post Children Act (2004) agenda, by introducing significantly more EWS staff. They have subsequently seen an overall improvement in school attendance as well as a corresponding rise in forthcoming league tables. Similarly, New York, which has the some of the poorest rates of school attendance in the world, is in the process of introducing 250 new equivalent staff and fifty new LA coordinators in a multi-million pound initiative to improve its school and district rates of attendance.

#### BEHAVIOUR SUPPORT SERVICES

Despite the NBAR recommendations, the quality of LA behavioural support and school improvement services varies markedly as recent ESTYN LA reports exemplify. Some LA's have too little or too broadly-stretched provision; including sometimes having inadequately trained staff for their complex roles. Although some recent improvements have been made in this area in some LA's in Wales, much more hard work needs to be undertaken before they are all equally effective.

Similarly, there is much variation in practice and in perceived success rates across Wales. Re-integration strategies remain weak in most LA's in Wales. The recently-established regional consortia may help in this regard.

However, in some LA's, basic school-LA liaison and communication practices need to be improved as most head teachers would agree. Also, some LA behavioural-led interventions are much too short and take much too long to implement and these often occur without having any real expectation or any realistic chance of longer-term success. Many LA's resources are stretched to capacity or beyond in this field already with some LA's having too few options at their disposal.

This was one of the reasons why I wrote *Tackling Behaviour in your Primary School* with Nicola Morgan (Reid and Morgan, 2012, published by Routledge) which is one of the first behavioural handbooks to incorporate the post Children Act (2004) agenda as well as a wide range of practical solutions. Although the book received widespread critical acclaim, and was largely based on practice and evidence based in Wales, it is currently selling much better in both England and Scotland than in Wales which may be indicative of a wider issue.

#### PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT

There is little doubt that involving parents better with schools, especially at the primary school level, is key to improving school attendance and pupils' behaviour (Desforges, 2003, *The Impact of Parental Involvement, Parental Support and Family Education On Pupil Achievement and Adjustment*, DfES Research Report, 433) (see also: NBAR, 2008).

The research conducted by Dalziel and Henthorne (2005, *Parents'/carers' attitudes towards school attendance*, DfES Research Report) showed just how different and difficult the behaviour and attitudes of the parents of school and persistent school absentees were as a group when compared with the parents of regularly-attending pupils.

One successful and pioneering venture, originally developed in South Wales, the Family Values Scheme (FVS), is now being utilised by schools in different parts of the UK (eg Herefordshire) and is the subject of a new book being published in February (Ellis, G, Morgan, M and Reid, K (2013) *Better Behaviour through Home-School Relations*, Routledge). The Family Values Scheme for example, has been used to improve pupils' literacy, numeracy and behaviour and attendance at Coed Eva School in Cwmbran; a recently-merged new school located in a seriously deprived catchment area with a previously very poor rate of attendance and high number of exclusions. By implementing the FVS, the head teacher and staff have been able to turn around events significantly. Explicitly, immediately prior to the introduction of the FVS, Coed Eva had 37 exclusions in its previous academic year. Last year, after the FVS was fully operational, it had no fixed or permanent exclusions apart from one fixed-term exclusion which lasted for a total of one and a half days following a serious incident. Therefore, the School and its staff are much better prepared to cope with all of its potential difficulties.

Despite giving an interactive presentation on the potential of the Scheme to senior staff within the DfES and, as requested, leaving CD's featuring the work of schools, parents and pupils, nothing further has ever been heard from them and so our pioneering work is continuing in other parts of the UK (eg Herefordshire). The Scheme has particular utility for parents, pupils and schools situated

in deprived areas; not least such areas as the South Wales Valleys. The FVS could and should have played a major role in the Families First Initiative.

#### SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS FRAMEWORK

The NBAR Report (2008) should be a major platform within the school effectiveness framework in Wales. I fully support the Minister's drive to raise standards in schools and LA's in Wales by including for example, a school's attendance statistics as part of their banding and performance profile. Given the above average number of pupils with special and additional learning needs, literacy and numeracy and attendance problems, it is hard to see how Wales will be able by 2015 to achieve the Minister's target of reaching the world top twenty in the Pisa tests, without substantial improvements in pupils' attainment, including literacy, numeracy and attendance, being made. Therefore, I also fully support ESTYN's drive to help to raise standards through their inspection remit as well as the important work being undertaken through the Schools Standards Unit within the DfES.

#### EARLY INTERVENTION

The two main recommendations of the NBAR Report were that:

- 1) "The Welsh Government should, through implementing the revised curriculum and assessment arrangements from September 2008 in schools in Wales, provide a clear lead that no child (within the mainstream ability range) should leave primary school without the functional ability to read and write."

Although a great deal more thought and hard work needs to go into this area, I am fully satisfied that the Minister, DfES, LA's, schools and teachers, are doing a lot of hard and good work in this field; not least through the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and such initiatives as one-to-one learning help, better mentoring and use of classroom assistants.

- 2) "The Welsh Government should prioritise early intervention strategies on work with attendance-related and behavioural-related problems amongst children and young people."

Both these core ideas were adopted as prime recommendations in the recent review in England (Taylor Report, 2012, DES, London) as well as in the review conducted for Parliament (Allen and Smith, 2008, Good Parents, Great Kids, Better Citizens, The Centre for Social Justice, London).

However, whereas point one above has benefitted from much concerted endeavour in Wales, much more needs to be done with regard to this latter issue. Far too many LA intervention strategies remain much too secondary-orientated (eg in their deployment of EWS/ESW staff and school attendance officers). Consequently, far too many pupils in Wales are not having their initial learning needs and support requirements analysed and met. Therefore, too many are under achieving and/or failing and eventually, leaving school without external qualifications, becoming NEET, and graduating from having comparatively minor attendance (and/or behavioural) issues to developing as persistent absentees or truants.

Too many intervention strategies in Wales (when these do actually occur) take place far too late. Research evidence shows that early intervention with a primary-aged pupil is at least six times more likely to bring about the required changes in learning, school attendance and behaviour

than later interventions when the pupil has reached the adolescent, and, often, the persistent phase.

Again, I would be happy to elaborate further on this point at the Inquiry if you so wish.

## GOVERNANCE OF SCHOOLS

It is regrettable that the training of governors on school attendance and behavioural issues is not yet mandatory in Wales.

## THE LAW ON SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

There can be little doubt that the law on school attendance has never worked very effectively for a whole variety of reasons (See: Zhang, M 2004, Time to Change the truancy laws? *Pastoral Care in Education*, 22, 2, 27-33; Reid, K (1999) *Truancy and Schools*, Reid, K (2002) *Truancy: Short and Long-Term Solutions*; Reid, K ((2010) *Finding strategic solutions to reduce truancy*, *Research in Education*, 84, 1-18; Reid, K (2012c) *An analysis of the future management of school attendance in Wales, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties*, 17,1,3-12; Reid, K (2012d) *The strategic management of truancy and school absenteeism: Finding solutions from a national perspective*, *Educational Review*, 64, 2, 196-211; Reid, K (2012e) *Reflections of being 'A man of truancy': Forty years on*, *Educational Studies*, 38, 2, 309-326).

Now that the Welsh Government has its own law making powers, it is suggested that a further review in this area should be undertaken by the Welsh Government in conjunction with a further update on the NBAR Report. Again, this is an area which I would be happy to elaborate upon further at the Inquiry (see papers 2 and 3) and would be delighted to lead, if invited.

Professor Ken Reid, OBE, January, 2013.

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