

Ymateb gan : Cymdeithas Genedlaethol yr Ysgolfeistri ac Undeb yr
Athrawesau

Response from : The National Association of Schoolmasters Union of
Women Teachers (NASUWT)

1. The NASUWT welcomes the opportunity to submit written evidence to the Children, Young People and Education Committee (CYPEC) Inquiry into Teachers' Professional Learning and Education.
2. The NASUWT is the largest teachers' union in Wales representing teachers and school leaders.

GENERAL COMMENTS

3. The NASUWT notes that the particular purpose of this inquiry is to consider the readiness of the workforce to implement the new curriculum and is seeking evidence in relation to three specific areas, namely:
 - arrangements for continuing professional development (CPD) for the current workforce;
 - the role of initial teacher education (ITE); and
 - the sufficiency of the future workforce.
4. In submitting this written response, the Union reminds the CYPEC that:
 - the new curriculum is still being developed through the Pioneer Schools network;
 - the provision of ITE and training is under review; and
 - schools continue to face year-on-year redundancies.
5. It is, therefore, difficult for the NASUWT to comment on the readiness of the workforce to implement the new curriculum when the full details of the design, shape and requirements of that curriculum remain unpublished.

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6. The Union can, however, state categorically that the teaching profession in Wales will seek to deliver the new curriculum, as eventually prescribed, with the due diligence, hard work and commitment that was given to the delivery of the National Curriculum.
7. The NASUWT maintains that this inquiry provides the CYPEC with an opportunity to acknowledge that the vast majority of schools in Wales delivered the National Curriculum to the best of their abilities against a background of underfunding, and that the decision to introduce a new curriculum was an indictment on the National Curriculum, its construction and assessment processes, rather than on the teaching profession.

SPECIFIC COMMENTS

8. The NASUWT offers the following comments and observations on the specific areas under scrutiny by the CYPEC.

Arrangements for continuing professional development for the current workforce

9. The NASUWT maintains that the reality for many teachers working in schools in Wales is that access to a structured programme of CPD has become a lottery, decided by the availability of funding for both the cost of the courses on offer and the release from teaching duties to attend courses, and, regrettably in some cases, on the caprice of some school managers.
10. The Union is aware of professional learning handbooks produced by the regional consortia but questions seriously how many teachers are able to access the training without it impacting adversely on their contractual entitlement to a work/life balance.
11. The NASUWT *Big Question Survey 2016* revealed that just 58% of members in Wales had accessed some form of CPD in the previous 12 months and that 88% believed that teachers should have a contractual entitlement to CPD in working time.

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12. The use of 'twilight sessions' in the stead of INSET days has become a growing practice in schools. This approach can often disenfranchise teachers with carer responsibilities from the training on offer, as it is not duplicated during the working day for those unable to attend the twilight session.
13. Furthermore, the NASUWT is aware that 'twilight sessions' are being used to offer training on a voluntary basis, which is outside of directed time, and that teachers are 'encouraged' to attend such sessions as the training is not duplicated within the working day.
14. The NASUWT has raised continually the lack of any clear 'delivery model' for the training that will be needed to implement the new curriculum and is concerned that what will eventually emerge from the work being undertaken in the Pioneer Schools will amount to little more than a series of online presentations which share good practice, and which can be accessed in a teacher's own time. In other words, a DIY approach to CPD which is wholly unsatisfactory in the context of the Welsh Government's ambition of a world-class education for every pupil.

The role of initial teacher education

15. Although the role of ITE in training and preparing student and newly qualified teachers to enter the profession fully is recognised, the NASUWT raised two key issues in the response submitted to the consultation on the draft criteria for the accreditation of ITE programmes in Wales and the proposal for the Education Workforce Council (EWC) to accredit ITE, which are germane to this inquiry.
16. The first issue raised by the Union was to question the prudence of consulting on the draft criteria before a consultation on revised professional standards had been undertaken.

17. Consequently, the NASUWT called for the consultation on the draft criteria to be postponed until the position on, and content of, the revised standards had been clearly established.
18. On the issue of the revised professional standards, the CYPEC should note that the Union has firmly rejected the draft revised standards which are currently being trialled prior to the formal consultation, as they present an accountability tool/framework for professional development, rather than a concise set of professional standards to which teachers should aspire.
19. The second issue in the NASUWT response referred to the proposal to give responsibility to the EWC for the accreditation of ITE in Wales. The Union opined that the EWC in its current form is not an appropriate body to take on the statutory responsibility for accrediting all programmes of ITE in Wales.
20. The NASUWT has argued that the EWC would need to demonstrate that it can act coherently, consistently and equitably in relation to its existing responsibilities, before additional functions are allotted to it. (A copy of the NASUWT response is attached at Annex A.)
21. Notwithstanding the issues raised in the NASUWT's response, perhaps the most obvious barrier for ITE to ready students and newly qualified teachers to implement the new curriculum is the fact that it is still being developed and remains unpublished.

The sufficiency of the future workforce

22. The NASUWT maintains that the simple answer to whether the future workforce will be sufficient to implement the new curriculum is no, based on current trends in relation to teacher numbers and the continuing under-investment in schools in Wales, which results in a continuing cycle of teacher and support staff redundancies.

23. The *2016 School Census Results* reveal that, although pupil numbers have dropped by just 586 pupils since 2010, the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) teaching posts lost during the same period stands at 1,051 FTE qualified teachers.
24. The latest NASUWT comparison for 2014/15 between the on-average per-pupil funding for maintained schools in Wales and those in England shows that the school funding gap between Wales and England now stands at £607.
25. The funding gap between maintained schools in Wales and maintained schools and academies in England is £862 and when maintained schools in Wales are compared with the academies in England, the gap reaches £1,324.
26. Although these figures present a slight improvement over the 2013/14 figures (£653, £843 and £1,287 respectively) with the exception of the comparison with the academies in England, this has more to do with a reduction/shift in funding in England than the slight increase in funding in Wales.
27. When considering the sufficiency of the future workforce, the CYPEC would do well to reflect on the fact that the £607 gap presents a shortfall of £283,198,855 in the funding going into the schools each year. This shortfall could provide for the appointment of almost 7,500 teachers, or a combination of thousands more teachers and thousands more support staff.
28. The NASUWT asserts that addressing this under-investment in schools, even on a gradual basis, would go a long way to accommodating a much needed funding system based on the needs of the new curriculum, rather than on pupil numbers, and could condemn redundancies in schools to the past.

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