

The Welsh Assembly Government's priorities and key programmes for education

The Welsh Assembly Government's key priorities are to ensure that all children and young people, irrespective of background, wealth, language or health have a flying start in life and the best possible basis for their future growth and development; and to build on these foundations providing young people with the skills and knowledge necessary for them to participate fully in all aspects of society as confident and competent citizens who are equipped to respond to the changing employment market.

The Welsh Assembly Government's vision for the future of learners was set out most recently in *The Learning Country: Vision into Action* which described key elements of the strategy we will be taking forward over the next few years.

This vision was further reinforced by *One Wales* which contains a range of initiatives to be delivered by the new coalition government in Wales.

Key policies:

The policies that will be at the heart of our programme for raising standards for our children include:

Flying Start programme

The programme is for children aged 0-3 living in disadvantaged communities, supported by other complementary programmes including Cymorth, Sure Start, the Basic Skills Strategy, the Parenting Action Plan and the Childcare Strategy, targeting the needs of young children and parents and improving outcomes for the most disadvantaged.

The Flying Start Programme is providing parenting, childcare and health support to families in the most disadvantaged areas. The first phase in 2007-08 targets 16,000 children and their families. Existing plans focus on embedding the programme.

Foundation Phase programme

The Foundation Phase is a curriculum built around desirable outcomes for children's learning and Key Stage 1 of the National Curriculum, but delivered through child-initiated and structured play, experiential learning and children's active involvement in their learning. It introduces a new approach to delivering a curriculum and continuum of learning for 3 to 7-year-olds. In September 2007, the number of pilot early years settings and schools will increase from 42 to 84. An action plan is in place to achieve the statutory rollout of the foundation phase curriculum from 2008.

The school curriculum and school effectiveness

We are also committed to a series of measures aimed at raising standards in both primary and secondary schools, and with a particular emphasis on narrowing the gap in performance we see at present.

Following a major review, a reformed skills-based curriculum will be introduced in 2008 for 7-14 year olds. As well as the stronger focus on skills, this will promote personal development and enable teachers to respond more effectively to the needs of individual pupils.

We will build on strategies such as the RAISE programme and 'Words Talk, Numbers Count' specifically designed to support pupils who fall behind, and to tackle the link between poor performance and deprivation.

A comprehensive programme is being developed to align the activities of the Assembly Government, local authorities and schools (known as tri-level reform) to secure consistent improvement in school effectiveness. This will be ambitious in scope and is intended to address the divergence in outcomes achieved by schools working in similar circumstances.

There remains scope for:

- reform to improve the effectiveness of all schools;
- increased focus on the needs of pupils from deprived backgrounds and groups of pupils who are underperforming, particularly those in danger of leaving school without any qualifications;
- securing effective planning of school places and linked investment in school buildings;
- tackling poor pupil behaviour and attendance; and
- promoting and developing mental health of pupils.

and we will strengthen work in these areas.

Present targets for attainment are that:

- the percentage of pupils at age 11 achieving expected levels at KS2 should be 75% in 2007 and 80% in 2010; and
- the percentages at age 14 (KS3) should be 60% in 2007 and 65% in 2010.

14 to 19 Learning Pathways

The 14-19 Learning Pathways initiative is designed to provide flexible learning programmes and pathways, tailored to the needs of individuals, to equip them with the necessary skills that they need for both their working and non-working lives. The Pathways are supported by the on-going development and roll-out of the Welsh Baccalaureate qualification. These present important challenges to teachers in order to deliver effectively.

Consistent with Article 12 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Welsh Assembly Government has been supporting the effective delivery of Extending Entitlement for all 11-25 year olds in Wales. The focus is on working to develop integrated and coherent services, support and experiences for young people. Young People's Partnerships (multi-agency local partnerships) are supported to secure the strategic and co-ordinated delivery of Extending Entitlement. The National Youth Service Strategy for Wales (launched in March 2007 and now being implemented) supports the delivery of Extending Entitlement.

An Assembly Measure for 14-19 Learning Pathways, to take forward framework powers from the Education and Inspection Act 2006, is being developed. This would help ensure breadth of choice for learners in all areas of Wales and would cover the five domains (maths, science and all aspects of technology; business and administration; services to people; creative arts and culture; humanities and languages). It is likely that minimums will be set as to the number of options available both as a total and in each domain.

Practitioner Development

The capabilities of practitioners are being extended and enhanced through a series of measures, including the implementation of changes in Initial Teacher Training and continued development of the Professional Development Framework by the General Teaching Council for Wales (GTCW).

There is a growing emphasis on professional development encompassing practitioners across education sectors and on accreditation of training.

At January 2006 over 28,000 teachers and 14,000 support staff in Wales were delivering learning to over half a million pupils. The standard of teaching is steadily improving with more lessons being taught to a 'good' or 'very good' standard.

Current key objectives are to ensure that there is an adequate supply of qualified teachers and support staff to meet the needs of schools and colleges in Wales, and to support the professional development of practitioners. The targets being worked to are:

- By 2010, the quality of learning in primary and secondary schools assessed by Estyn to be Grade 3 (satisfactory) or better in 98% of classes; and
- By 2010, the quality of teaching in primary and secondary schools assessed by Estyn to be Grade 2 (good) or better in 80% of classes
- By 2010 the quality programmes assessed by Estyn in FE colleges to be Grade 3 or better in 95% of programmes and Grade 2 or better in 65% of programmes.

Labour Market in Wales

Teacher Supply – Outlook for the demand for teachers

Evidence has shown (see details on report of review of ITT provision under 'ITT Change Plan' below) that there is a need for far fewer ITT places in the future if Wales is not to produce considerably more teachers than can gain employment in Wales or elsewhere. Newly qualified teachers have been finding difficulties in securing permanent teaching posts in some areas of Wales, particularly at primary level. This overproduction of NQTs, combined with current and future projections of a continuing fall in pupil numbers has resulted in an over supply of qualified teachers for Wales' needs.

A link to the latest statistical return on pupil numbers can be accessed here:

<http://new.wales.gov.uk/docrepos/40382/40382313/statistics/schools/1152752/swgs2006/swgs2006-app1.pdf?lang=en>

Data on the number of teachers in service and vacancies for full-time permanent teachers in maintained schools in Wales as at January 2007 is taken from STATS3 survey of LEAs. A copy of the statistical first release Teachers in Service, Vacancies and Sickness Absence, January 2007 can be accessed here:

<http://new.wales.gov.uk/topics/statistics/headlines/schools-2007/hdw200706211/?lang=en>

For teachers in service (f/t equivalent) statistics show that:

- The total numbers of teachers in service was 29,198, a decrease of 585 since January 2006.
- There were 27,818 qualified teachers employed in maintained nursery, primary and secondary schools in Wales – a decrease of 643 since January 2006
- There were 686 teaching staff in special schools an increase of 39 since January 2006
- The number of teachers providing education other than at school increased from 289 to 319 over this period while the numbers of lecturers employed to provide adult or community education increased from 278 to 291.

For teacher vacancies at January 2007 the figures show:-

- The total number of teacher vacancies in nursery, primary and secondary schools was higher at 149 in January 2007 compared with 121 in January 2006.
- The total nursery, primary and secondary rate remains low at 0.5%.
- There were 67 vacancies in secondary schools in January 2007, slightly less than in January 2006. Individual subjects with most vacancies were English and Design and Technology with 8. The total number of vacancies in all science subjects was 11.
- There were no vacancies in nursery schools – the same as January 2006.
- There were 9 vacancies in special schools, 3 higher than the previous years.

The STATS 3 data collection from LEAs captures all teachers employed by the LEA on a specific day in January each year. In Wales the overall vacancy rate across all sectors remains low overall at 0.5%. However, for various reasons it is possible because of geographical factors, language requirements and individual LEAs data collection methods, for vacancy rates in some LEA areas to appear to be above the national average. The Assembly Government's view is that at present Wales is continuing to produce more teachers than it needs and while there might be some recruitment difficulties in certain areas, possibly for the reasons outlined above, overall, particularly in the primary sector, applications for posts across all phases are over subscribed.

Provisional results from the January 2007 Schools' Census show that

- 916 teacher vacancies were advertised in secondary schools between 1 January 2006 and 31 December 2006
- an average of 11 applications were received per English medium vacancy and 4 per Welsh medium vacancy.
- 94 per cent of English medium and 99 per cent of Welsh medium vacancies were filled from among the candidates
- 565 teacher vacancies were advertised in primary schools between 1 January 2006 and 31 December 2006
- an average of 29 applications were received per English medium vacancy and 8 per Welsh medium vacancy
- 96 per cent of English medium and 97 per cent of Welsh medium vacancies were filled from amongst the candidates.

Full details are at

<http://new.wales.gov.uk/docrepos/40382/40382313/statistics/schools/1152752/sdr118-2007-e.pdf?lang=en>

Teacher Retirements – Teacher Age Profiles in Wales

The projected increase in the number of teacher retirements is well-known and accounted for in the overall teacher planning models developed for use in England. The General Teaching Council for Wales publishes an Annual Statistics Digest produced from its register of qualified teachers. The latest digest (March 2007) includes statistics relating to the age profile of registered teachers in Wales at table 1.3. A Link to the digest (age profiling for registered teachers is on page 5) can be accessed here:

http://www.gtcw.org.uk/documents/stats_digest/GTCW%20Annual%20Statistics%202007.pdf

The age profile of teachers in Wales is similar to those published for England, and therefore, there are no particular differences in approach that we would expect the STRB to take in respect of Wales in making its pay recommendations to the Secretary of State. In Wales, the Assembly Government will be taking teacher age profiles, including projected teacher retirement data, into consideration as part of our on-going work into the feasibility of a teacher supply model specific to Wales.

ITT Change Plan

The Welsh Assembly Government commissioned Professor John Furlong, Director of the University Of Oxford Department Of Educational Studies, to undertake a review of initial teacher training (ITT) provision in Wales in 2005. The review's terms of reference focussed primarily on how ITT course intake targets, courses and course availability might better deliver newly qualified teachers in suitable numbers appropriate to meet the needs of maintained schools in Wales. A copy of the review report can be accessed [here](#):

<http://new.wales.gov.uk/about/departments/dcells/publications/179562-wag/248604/?lang=en>.

In response, an Initial Teacher Training Change Plan was announced by the Welsh Assembly Government in a paper to the ELLS Committee on 29 March 2006. It set out how the Welsh Assembly Government intends to take forward changes in ITT provision, and covered all the principal issues which need to be resolved by 2010/11 in order to restructure ITT provision so that it more closely aligns the production of newly qualified teachers with the changing needs of schools in Wales. The paper can be accessed at:

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-committees/bus-committees-second/bus-committees-second-ell-home/bus-committees-second-ell-agendas/n0000000000000000000000000042731.pdf?langoption=3&ttl=ELLS%282%29-06-06%3A%20Paper%202%20Initial%20Teacher%20Training-F>

During 2006-07, a number of major work items were implemented in the first year of the ITT Change Plan, working toward the long-term aim of reducing ITT numbers and more precise planning for future ITT intake targets. An update report on progress on the 2006-07 short term ITT Change Plan was presented to the Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills Committee on 8 March 2007 and a copy of report this can be seen on the National Assembly for Wales's website at <http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-committees/bus-committees-second/bus-committees-second-ells-home/bus-committees-second-ells-agendas/4e3202bfe0e6c4958102b4c4483a4bcb.pdf?langoption=3&ttl=ELLS%282%29-04-07%20Paper%202%3A%20Initial%20Teacher%20Training>

Welsh Assembly Government has now announced the updated initial teacher training Change Plan work programme for 2007-08 and 2008-09 onwards. Details are at:- <http://new.wales.gov.uk/publications/accessinfo/decisionreport/DREducation/1576287/?lang=en>

Included in the 2007/08 work programme are key actions to address specific teacher supply and demand issues as follows:

Welsh data aspects – Teacher Supply Model & Analysis of the statistical basis for reducing overall ITT intake targets

The Assembly Government's Statistical Directorate is currently undertaking work to develop a Teacher Supply Model (TSM) which is specific to Wales. This work will evaluate the feasibility and likely resource implications of running a Welsh TSM. At this stage, the proposal is to evaluate the feasibility of developing and maintaining an on-going Welsh teacher supply model.

This preliminary work will consider whether a Welsh TSM is a practical, cost-effective and workable proposition. This feasibility work is due to be completed later this year and we anticipate that the Welsh TSM will in the future be able to consider requirements Welsh medium ITT provision; and subject specific data. However, STRB will wish to be aware that it is the Assembly Government's intention to get the overall projected teacher numbers right

before considering how Welsh medium requirements, specific subject requirements, etc., can be included in the TSM.

Outline plan for reductions in ITT course numbers up to 2010-11

This work builds on the reduction to ITT intake target numbers notified in previous years. The planned reductions are based on an outline working assumption that compared with the 2004-05 ITT intake numbers, primary provision will reduce by 50% and secondary by 25% by 2010-11.

Furlong's general conclusion in the ITT review report is that the scale of the reductions needed, as indicated above, is broadly right and that there is, in fact, a noticeable margin for error built into those figures. It also looked at how we can specify more precisely the needs of maintained schools in Wales in arriving at ITT intake targets in future. In looking at intake targets for years up to 2010-11, we still have three years to formally allocate intake targets. The first of these (2008-09) will not be finalised until later this year, so any data arising from the teacher supply model feasibility work that would cause us to look again at these figures can be taken into account.

The overall effect of these reductions are estimated to be as follows

If the indicative figures are maintained:

primary numbers would reduce:-

- from 1,150 in 2004-05 to 575 in 2010-11 (reduction of 575)
- from 1,036 (2006-07) – a change from the current numbers of 461.

secondary numbers would reduce:-

- from 1,320 in 2004-05 to 990 in 2010-11 (reduction of 340)
- from 1,280 (2006-07) – a change from the current numbers of 290.

The figures do not include Graduate Teacher Programme places (as indicated previously to STRB these are approximately 50 pa at present) or projected Open University places (approximately 25 pa).

The indicative figures are overall targets only. We have not at this stage attempted to look at figures for individual subjects such as maths and science. However, the reductions in postgraduate secondary numbers should have least reduction in priority subjects (and within these, least reduction in maths and science numbers); and most reduction in non-priority subjects.

Undergraduate numbers reduce proportionately further than postgraduate, within the overall reductions. This is because we envisage undergraduate provision to have a more specialist role in the future, focusing for example on Welsh medium provision and providing diverse entry into ITT, and on priority subjects at secondary level.

The general conclusion, backed by the findings in the ITT review report, is that the scale of the reductions needed is broadly right and that there is, in fact, a noticeable margin for error built into those figures. However, STRB should note that these are outline working assumptions and although we have provided indicative targets for years up to 2010-11, these figures are very much in outline only. They may be subject to noticeable changes, depending on the outcomes of our examination of data collection improvements and Welsh teacher supply modelling. ITT intake targets for entry to courses for 2008/09 will be set in line with these indicative targets later this year.

Review of the statistical planning issues underlying Welsh Medium ITT course provision

The main ITT Change Plan included proposals for a review of the issues surrounding Welsh medium ITT provision. The review, which was charged with an examination of the future supply and demand issues for Welsh medium teachers and production of robust modelling methods to assist with better planning, reported earlier this year. It is the Assembly Government's view that underpinning everything, as with ITT provision generally, is the need to develop clearer figures on the current and future demand for teachers able to teach through the medium of Welsh and this was described as an essential step in the ITT review report.

For 2007/08, we will be considering actions arising from the recommendations contained in the report and if possible look at Welsh medium provision as part of the on-going Welsh teacher supply modelling work. Following the outcomes of this review, we will want to look in the medium term at further reviews which will consider more systemic issues such as what developments might be needed to ITT to take account of policy changes and to improve Welsh language skills and numbers.

Reconfiguration of HEI ITT providers in Wales

The ITT review report recommended a reduction from the current seven mainstream ITT providers to three (each made up of collaborative ventures between two of the current providers). This was because sharing the projected reduced number of ITT places amongst all the current providers on an individual basis was not considered to be a viable proposition. As part of the Assembly Government's published ITT Change Plan Following the review report, the Welsh Assembly Government published (March 2006) an ITT Change Plan which covered all the principal issues which needed to be resolved by 2010-11 in order to restructure ITT provision to better reflect the changing needs of schools in Wales.

As part of the main ITT Change Plan, we said that by 2010/11 there would be a reconfiguration of ITT provision, based on fewer individual providers than at present. Following detailed advice submitted by the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW) on proposals for the reconfiguration of the sector the Welsh Assembly Government has agreed in principle that HEFCW should in partnership with the ITT institutions take forward their proposals to reconfigure the ITT sector.

Three collaborative ITT schools are proposed, each with two current providers in partnership, but with structure, organisation and portfolios varying according to the individual proposals submitted. These should comprise:

- one covering North and Mid Wales, to be provided by the University of Wales, Aberystwyth and the University of Wales, Bangor.
- One covering South-West Wales, to be provided by Swansea Institute, and Trinity College, Carmarthen
- One covering South-East Wales, to be provided by the University of Wales Institute, Cardiff and the University of Wales, Newport
- That undergraduate primary provision would end at the North East Wales Institute, Wrexham.

We have also stressed that:

- ITT numbers allocated in 2006/07 which are not utilised in intake targets set for entry years up to and including 2010/11 should be redeployed within institutions in other HE education-related work in line with Assembly Government workforce planning priorities; and

- all three ITT Schools to be substantially complete and able to receive intake numbers on the reconfigured basis by September 2010.

Additionally, in respect of more specific proposals for primary provision:-

- HEFCW should protect Welsh medium provision and diverse access by the retention of a measure of undergraduate provision;
- this should be delivered by giving priority to ring-fencing Welsh medium numbers, based on the current regional pattern and volume;
- on diversity HEFCW should monitor trends in this area and include in its reports assessments of the state of access diversity in ITT, with where necessary any proposals to require providers to take actions to maintain a diverse intake in future ITT strategies; and
- for postgraduate provision, Welsh medium targets should not be introduced at the moment while reconfiguration work is in progress.

In respect of more specific proposals for secondary provision:-

- plans to incorporate secondary undergraduate provision in the new provider set-up should be reconsidered as reconfiguration work progresses;
- the organisation of secondary undergraduate provision should be on the current regional pattern and volume but with some protection for Welsh medium numbers; and
- for secondary postgraduate provision the current regional pattern will be the starting point, modified where necessary to take account of the new providers. Welsh medium targets should not be introduced at the moment while reconfiguration work is in progress.

We have asked HEFCW to take this work forward, as before working in close collaboration with the ITT HE sector in Wales. Details of the announcement covering this issue are at <http://new.wales.gov.uk/publications/accessinfo/decisionreport/DREducation/1602016/?lang=en>

Recruitment to the leadership group.

Head teacher supply

In Wales there is no evidence of a shortage of head teachers. Latest statistics show that in January 2007 there were some 36 vacant head teacher posts, 9 in secondary schools and 27 in primary schools. These were vacancies that were planned to be filled or where recruitment had been unsuccessful.

A recent survey by Education Data Surveys published in January 2007 gives a more dynamic idea of the numbers of advertisements over a year and showed that there were 2,682 advertisements for head teacher appointments across England and Wales during 2006. 12% of primary schools and 11% of secondary schools in England and Wales advertised for a new head during 2006. In Wales, the percentage of posts requiring re-advertisement was 19% which compares very well with other regions where the figure ranges between 30% and 57%.

From September 2005, it became mandatory for all head teachers to have acquired the National Professional Qualification for Headship prior to taking up their post. Recruitment to the NPQH programme is carried out on the basis of nationally set criteria which are applied through a fair and open national recruitment process. This means that any candidate who can demonstrate that they meet the required standard is able to gain a place on the programme. All costs of the programme and the candidates' attendance are met by the Welsh Assembly Government. In December 2006 Estyn published a report which showed that as at September 2006 there were 1002 teachers who had successfully

achieved the National Professional Qualification for Head teachers (NPQH) and so were available to take up posts in schools in Wales. The Estyn report also endorsed the national selection process and confirmed that most head teacher vacancies in Wales attract between six and 15 applicants.

There is, however, some evidence that there are fewer applicants for vacancies in certain types of school, for example in Welsh medium and faith based schools because they are recruiting from a smaller potential pool of candidates. There may also be local factors such as plans for school reorganisation, or schools that face particularly challenging circumstances, which mean that the post of head teacher is less attractive to a wide range of candidates. However, we feel that the flexibilities already within the pay system are sufficient to support Governors to find suitable candidates for the role.

Pedagogy

The aim of the pedagogy initiative is to improve the outcomes for learners by enhancing the pedagogical skills, knowledge and practice of practitioners, creating an expectation that all practitioners in Wales will engage in the most effective learning and teaching.

Eleven Pedagogy Champions will work closely with colleagues within the Department for Culture, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills offering advice on the direction of the pedagogy initiative, suggesting areas of practice that the pedagogy initiative should seek to develop.

The Champions will be fundamental to the development of the pedagogy initiative in Wales and will become the public face of the initiative. The Champions will:-

- Work closely with colleagues within the Department for Culture, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills offering advice on the direction of the pedagogy initiative, suggesting areas of practice that the pedagogy initiative should seek to develop.
- Identify and quality assure examples of innovative practice (locally, regionally, nationally and internationally) and advise on the most effective methods for the dissemination of this practice throughout Wales.
- Enable and encourage practitioners to access and make the links between good practise in their own field of experience and that used in others areas.
- Become advocates for the pedagogy initiative and publicise each aspect of the initiative direct to practitioners and, when appropriate, to the media in a positive and inspirational way.
- Participate in educational networks to support and disseminate the key messages of the pedagogy initiative to practitioners and draw in positive examples.
- Contribute to the development and implementation of an effective communication and marketing strategy.
- Work closely with external stakeholders – e.g. General Teaching Council for Wales, LEAs, Higher Education Institutions, teaching unions, subject associations to ensure that the pedagogy initiative embraces all interesting and innovative practice, and that practitioners have the opportunity to engage with the initiative in ways other than Assembly led events.

Is retention an issue for any particular groups of teachers?

Marketing of Teaching as a Profession – recruitment of under represented groups

As indicated above it is clear that we are currently producing too many qualified teachers for Wales' needs, particularly at primary level. Whilst we would like to see more men in primary teaching, individuals are having difficulty securing permanent teaching work in the primary

sector, and in certain secondary priority subjects. As outlined in this paper steps have already been taken to reduce ITT intake targets, particularly to primary undergraduate and postgraduate courses but also across the range of secondary ITT courses and further reductions are planned up to 2010/11.

Whilst we would like to see more men in primary there is clear evidence that individuals are having difficulty securing permanent teaching work in the primary sector, and for this reason we do not propose to specifically market primary teaching as a career in Wales. It is our view that any such marketing in Wales could raise expectations that we have a shortage of primary teachers in Wales, and that primary posts are readily available.

The Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA) undertakes work to provide information about and to market teaching as a career in Wales as well as in England, via a Memorandum of Understanding it has with the Assembly. This work recognises the importance of ITT contributing to the diversity of the teaching force, and supports efforts to recruit from under-represented groups, including raising the number of men training as primary school teachers; people from minority ethnic backgrounds and those with disabilities.

As part of the MOU, the teacher recruitment adviser for Wales works closely with ITT providers in Wales on implementing recruitment strategies to promote teaching as a career to these under-represented groups. Strategies are in place for improving minority ethnic teacher recruitment to reflect positive role models and to be more representative of the minority ethnic communities in Wales. Activities currently taking place include the targeting of advertising to specific minority ethnic media in Wales; the inclusion of positive case studies from minority ethnic teachers from Wales in the TDA's recruitment literature and on their recruitment website; and the attendance of the TDA at any appropriate minority ethnic events in Wales.

A similar strategy is in place to target the recruitment of teachers who are able to teach through the medium of Welsh; activities include TDA's attendance at the Eisteddfod and other Welsh language based events; the production of bilingual and Welsh language press and television advertising and Welsh language recruitment materials; and a Welsh language recruitment website.

Quality of teaching

HM Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales reports on this area in each annual report. The report for 2005-06 – the most recent - concludes that–

Primary schools

Overall, the quality of teaching and assessment is good or better (Grades 1 and 2) in 84% of the total number of primary schools inspected in 2005-06 with 17% having outstanding work.

The report also contains information on a smaller group of primary schools where there is data available on inspection markings over a 6 year period i.e. inspection grades for the quality of teaching for 1999-2000 and 2005-06. It concludes that for this cohort the percentage obtaining the top two inspection grades has improved from 48% of lessons observed in 1999-2000 to 79% in 2005-06. This is a very impressive improvement of some 31 percentage points.

The overall profile for this group of schools in 2005-06 is

Grade 1 – 17%
Grade 2 - 62%
Grade 3 - 20%
Grade 4 - 1%
Grade 5 - 0%

In particular, outstanding work includes:

- encouraging pupils to work on their own;
- skilful use of support staff to raise standards; and
- activities that mean that pupils have to use their number, reading and writing skills in an integrated way across the curriculum.

Shortcomings include:

- pupils not being clear about what they are learning;
- lessons where pupils sit for too long listening to a teacher or working at desk based tasks; and
- work that is too easy for some pupils.

Secondary Schools

Overall the quality of teaching and assessment is good or better (Grades 1 and 2) in 69% of the secondary schools inspected in 2005-06 with 17% having outstanding work.

The report also contains information on a smaller group of secondary schools where there is data available on inspection markings over a 6 year period i.e. inspection grades for the quality of teaching for 1999-2000 and 2005-06. It concludes that for this cohort the percentage obtaining the top two inspection grades has improved from 56% of lessons observed in 1999-2000 to 69% in 2005-06. This is an improvement of 13 percentage points.

The overall profile for this group of schools in 2005-06 is

Grade 1 – 17%
Grade 2 - 52%
Grade 3 - 26%
Grade 4 - 5%
Grade 5 - 0%

In schools with outstanding features teachers:

- have excellent working relationships with their pupils;
- plan stimulating learning experiences;
- have high expectations of all pupils;
- ask challenging and open questions; and
- make sure that all pupils know how they can improve their work.

More teachers are beginning to use assessment for learning as a teaching strategy. This approach helps pupils to understand how assessment can improve the quality of their work. However, effective practice is not common in this area.

Potential impact of the introduction of variable tuition fees from September 2006 on recruitment to teaching.

Student Support Available in 2007/08

From this autumn, the 2007/08 academic year, Welsh higher education institutions, like their counterparts in England, will be able to charge flexible tuition fees of up to £3,070. Under the partial fee support system, students from Wales who are studying in Wales will be eligible for a fee remission grant of £1845. These arrangements only apply to students starting courses of study on or after September 2006.

Students entering higher education after September 2006, any tuition fee payment, at whatever level, does not need to be paid up front. Students are now eligible for a loan to cover the cost of their tuition fees and these loans do not need to be repaid until the student has left higher education and is earning more than £15,000.

Depending on parental income, students may also be eligible for an Assembly Learning Grant of up to £2700 and a Welsh Bursary of £305.

Application v Accepted Applicants

- We must wait until the round of 'clearing' for 2007 entry to HE has been completed and students have accepted a place of study before we get a meaningful picture for the 2007/08 cohort of students.
- The publication of the A level results will have an effect on accepted applicants to HE. Whether a student has done as well as expected or not quite so well, will have an effect on actual entry to HE figures and it will be interesting to see the difference between UCAS applications and entry figures.
- Overall UCAS applicants to Welsh HEIs at this point in the 2006 entry cycle had decreased by 0.5% compared with 2005, however the final number of accepted applicants was 0.4% higher than the previous year.
- The role that higher education plays in improving the quality of all of our lives in Wales is an important one. The Welsh Assembly Government is committed to widening access to higher education and to engaging with those people who historically have not considered higher education as an option.

UCAS Application Figures

- Latest figures released by UCAS show an increase in applications to higher education across the UK.
- The number of applicants applying to full time UK higher education courses increased by 5.3% as at 30 June 2007, this follows a decrease in 2006 after a record increase of 8.2% for 2005 entry.
- Taking this into account, the overall figures represent a 1.6% increase from 2 years ago (2005 entry).
- The evidence suggests that a wide range of factors influence students' decisions as to their preferred place of study. The student finance arrangements that were introduced last year have allowed students the flexibility to make choices without having to give undue prominence to financial considerations but we must continue to work hard to get this message across.
- The increase of 0.7% of the number of Welsh domiciles applying for higher education across the UK, although small, indicates that we are getting the right messages across.
- The number of Welsh students applying to study at a Welsh institution has increased – up 1.0% on last year. This follows a large spike last year where applications

increased by 6.7%. We want prospective students to choose Wales as their place of study for not only the excellence of our higher education sector or the student support package that is available to Welsh domicile students, but also the culture and vibrancy that Wales, as a nation, exudes.

Teachers' workload & morale and motivation of teachers.

As a signatory to the National Agreement on Raising Standards and Tackling Workload, WAG remains an active member of the Workforce Agreement Monitoring Panel (WAMG). We work closely with partner signatories on monitoring the implementation of the agreement and associated contractual changes.

We also maintain close links with the Development arm of the TDA so that approaches to monitoring and the dissemination of support is consistent across England and Wales.

In Wales we draw on the support of Local Authority Change Co-ordinators (the equivalent of Remodelling Advisers in England) to monitor implementation locally and to be the focal point for support to schools. Change Co-ordinators, in turn, work with Local Social Partnership groups to provide a forum for addressing local issues.

We have drawn heavily on the annual OME Teacher's Workloads Diary Survey to provide some objective data on teachers' workload and explored aspects of this (in particular, cover burdens) in further survey work by Local Authority Change Co-ordinators. This survey work broadly supported the findings of the OME Diary survey and, together with similar survey work carried out in England, is being used by WAMG as a basis for additional guidance to schools on further reducing the overall cover burden.

As a member of WAMG it is clear that current workload issues are similar in England and Wales and this supported by the local survey work we have carried out, alongside that done by the TDA in England.

In broad terms it confirms that teachers have experienced improvements in workload through contractual changes such as the provision of time for planning, preparation and assessment and the removal of clerical and administrative tasks. As already referred to above, the reduction of cover, mainly in secondary schools, continues to be a focus of attention.

Members of the school leadership group, and in particular headteachers, have not yet widely felt the same positive benefits and their workload continues to be a cause for concern. Clearly this also impacts on perceived and real work/life balance and can adversely affect the morale of this sector of the school workforce. We are working with WAMG partners to identify positive means to address this issue. The full implementation of Dedicated Headship Time and the further application of remodelling strategies to transfer administrative tasks away from the school leadership group are two areas that require further attention but there is no evidence to indicate that the situation differs significantly between England and Wales.

School Workload Advisory Panel (SWAP)

The School Workload Advisory Panel (SWAP) was established in 2004 as part of 'Raising Standards and Tackling Workload: A National Agreement'. The aim of the Panel (the equivalent of the Implementation Review Unit in England) is to minimise the bureaucratic and other burdens placed on schools in Wales by the Assembly Government, LEAs and other organisations.

Membership of the panel comprises of practitioners drawn from schools across Wales. A Public Appointments Exercise is due to commence to increase the membership of the Panel from six to eight members. As an independent body SWAP publishes its Annual Report in October and has its own website www.swapwales.co.uk.

The Welsh Assembly Government has worked with SWAP to develop workload impact assessment procedures for policy makers and panel members can be involved at an early planning stage to provide advice before any consultation document is produced. In addition to this the Assembly has given its commitment to the production of 'model policies' where practicable, for each new initiative that impacts on schools.

SWAP engages regularly with teaching unions and associations. Panel members respond to new areas of concerns raised in relation to unnecessary, bureaucratic burdens placed on those working in schools in Wales, advising assembly policy developers accordingly.

The Welsh Assembly Government is very much aware of the need not to overload schools with initiatives and is keen to ensure that where new initiatives are developed these are properly planned to provide schools with sufficient time for changes to be embedded. The Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills is currently undergoing an extensive reorganisation and this issue is being actively considered in the context of the reorganisation.

Teacher Support Cymru

As part of the Teacher Support Network, the work of Teacher Support Cymru contributes to the Welsh Assembly Government's implementation of key policies by improving the effectiveness of teachers.

The contact centre for Teacher Support Line Cymru offers around the clock, free confidential counselling, advice and information for training, serving and retired teachers.

As a result of funding from the Welsh Assembly Government, in June this year Teacher Support Cymru launched a fully bilingual online coaching service for all teachers in Wales. Teacher Support Online Cymru enables teachers to have a one-to-one confidential email dialogue with a professional and experienced coach in either Welsh or English via a secure website and teachers who use the service receive support in both professional and personal matters and access to information, resources and fact sheets.

Pay

Teacher's earnings relative to the earnings of other graduates

The Annual Population Survey for 2006 shows that earnings for teachers in Wales are around 10-15 per cent higher than the average for all employees in Wales with NVQ level 4 or above. This compares to earnings for teachers of around 4 per cent higher in the rest of the UK (excluding London and the South East).

Evidence from the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) for recent years shows that average gross weekly earnings for teachers who work full-time in Wales are around 95 per cent of average gross weekly full-time earnings for other professional occupations. This is slightly higher than the UK (excluding London and the South East).

Views about the pay matters in STRB's remit and the Secretary of State's proposals e.g, for a further multi year pay award and the implications for Wales.

We have no further comments to make over and above those contained in our written evidence in that teachers' pay and conditions of service are not devolved and DCSF proposals contain no separate consequences for education in Wales.

With regard to a multi year pay award please see our comments contained in the section on affordability.

Affordability

Process and timing for determining the next local authority revenue settlement in Wales.

The local government revenue and capital settlements, like all Welsh Assembly Government spending programmes will be determined by the outcomes of the Comprehensive Spending Review in October and the internal resource assessment exercise (RAE).

Government funding for the devolved administrations' budgets is normally determined within spending reviews alongside departments of the UK and in accordance with the policies set out in this Statement. The UK Parliament votes the necessary provision to the Secretaries of State; they make payments to the devolved administrations.

Each devolved administration's budget is not funded exclusively by grant from the UK Parliament. Further elements of the budget are covered by funding from locally financed expenditure (including non-domestic), and through borrowing by local authorities of Wales and other public bodies to fund their capital spending.

Under the formula, the Welsh Assembly Government receives a population-based proportion of changes in planned spending on comparable UK Government services in England. Changes in each devolved administration's spending allocation is determined by the quantity of the change in planned spending in departments of the UK Government, the extent to which the relevant UK programme is comparable with the services carried out by each devolved administration and each country's population proportion. The introduction of resource budgeting means that this approach is applied to resource and capital budgets but the principles remain the same.

The allocation of public expenditure between the services under the control of the devolved administrations is for the devolved administrations to determine. Consistent with the arrangements for departments of the UK Government, the devolved administrations will normally be expected to accommodate additional pressures on their budgets, with access to the Reserve being considered in exceptional circumstances only. Unforeseen pressures should be catered for by offsetting savings and re-allocating priorities.

A provisional settlement will be published by the Welsh Assembly Government in early November, at which point authorities are informed of their indicative allocations so they can begin budget planning for the coming financial year. There is a formal period of consultation on the provisional settlement. The final settlement, reflecting any adjustments made following consultation, is put to the National Assembly for approval in early January and confirmed to authorities shortly thereafter. For 2008-09, the outcome of the RAE process and therefore details of the provisional settlement for 2008-09 to 2009-10, will not be finalised until October at the earliest.

Funding for schools in Wales

Schools in Wales are funded primarily on a non-hypothecated basis through the local government revenue settlement. These arrangements have operated since before local government reorganisation in 1996. The Welsh Assembly Government has not made any changes to these arrangements because it believes that democratically elected local authorities are best placed to manage the delivery of local services, including schools, taking account of the funding provided through the settlement. This is the basis of the Assembly Government's Partnership Agreement with local government.

Once authorities receive their settlement allocation, they set budgets for the services for which they are responsible – including schools - according to local needs and priorities. Thus the Assembly Government does not determine individual authority education budgets. The settlement contains a notional amount of funding for education in the shape of the education Indicator Based Assessment (IBA), which, along with IBAs for other services, are added together to give the total Standard Spending Assessment for each authority. However, IBAs are not spending targets and authorities are free to set their own budgets for which they are democratically accountable.

The Assembly Government intends to introduce 3-year local government settlements to support improved medium term financial planning by local authorities. The first cycle will begin in 2008-09 to coincide with the Comprehensive Spending Review period. A requirement for local authorities to provide their schools with indicative 3-year budgets will be introduced at the same time. A 3-year pay deal for teachers would help underpin the increased stability and certainty we are seeking to bring through 3-year budgets.

Plans to move to multi year budgeting for schools

The Welsh Assembly Government is currently consulting on the proposed arrangements for the first cycle of three-year settlements for local authorities in Wales.

The original consultation exercise in November 2005 indicated clearly that local authorities welcomed the principle of moving to three year settlements (TYS). It was also clear that the detailed implementation arrangements required careful consideration taking into account the need to co-ordinate with the timing of the Comprehensive Spending Review. Consequently, the then Minister for Finance, Local Government and Public Services determined that the first three year settlement cycle should be introduced from 2008-09 to coincide with the start of the spending review period.

The process of setting an overall budget for the local government settlement for the next three years is part of a wider Assembly Government objective of establishing three-year funding allocations.

Table 1 below summarises the proposed approach.

Table 1: Three year settlement plan for revenue and capital settlements

	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-2013
Spending Review	2007				
Quantum	Fixed	Fixed	Indicative		
Spending Review			2009		
Quantum			Fixed	Fixed	Indicative
Spending					2011

Review					
Quantum					Fixed

The proposals for three year settlements include a review of the arrangements before the second tranche of three year settlements begin in 2010 – 2011.

A review will allow consideration of, amongst other things, the coverage of the settlement, the integration of these arrangements with local authorities' own financial and strategic planning and the use of data projections following developments in the availability of projected data based on work currently being undertaken by the Assembly Government Statistical Directorate. It will also allow consideration of any further changes such as whether to follow the principle that the settlement is reopened at the start of each spending review cycle. Scotland and England both follow the principle that the first year's figures are reworked for the purposes of rebasing the second and third years' allocations but are not used themselves to redistribute the previously published first year's allocation.

The development of Three Year Settlements should be viewed as a mechanism for enabling and supporting wider policy development around the Making the Connections Agenda, the capital investment strategy and more specific policy agendas in such areas as school budgeting.

The Assembly Government has committed to use its powers under the Education Act 2005 to require local authorities to set three-year budgets for schools from April 2008, as a natural follow on from three year settlements. The pupil projections being developed at the level of individual years will support this development. However, three year settlements only provide an enabling mechanism and separate work is underway in discussion with local authorities to develop detailed proposals and draft regulations for consultation on how three year schools budget will operate in practice.

Comments on these proposals are due by 12 September. Any comments received will then be considered by the WAG in preparing a final paper to the Consultative Forum on Finance for consideration at its meeting on 4 October.

The paper will set out the details of the three year settlement arrangements to be applied when the provisional settlement details are published in early November.

Current costs of teachers pay in Wales and the projected costs of the next pay award and pay drift

- The funding mechanism in Wales does not allow us to produce figures similar to those produced in England. As we fund local authorities in Wales on an unhypothecated basis an estimate of the amount of funding that local authorities need to fund schools and teachers' pay is included in their settlement. Local authorities are then free to allocate funding according to local priorities and needs. The Welsh Assembly does collect revenue expenditure analysis, however in terms of detailed analysis there are some wide variations in reporting across authorities, so these figures can only be considered as a rough estimate and are not a reliable source of information.
- As reported in the WLGA's Expenditure Sub Group Report for 2008-09 to 2010-2011, a recent survey undertaken jointly by the WLGA and the Association of Directors of Education in Wales, showed, that the increases in average teacher costs over and above the pay award has peaked and is now entering a phase of steadier, more sustainable growth at a rate of 0.2%.

How in the circumstances, might the STRB take account of the affordability of our recommendations in Wales?

The delay to the announcement containing the results of the UK Comprehensive Spending Review means there is no information available on the likely funding in Wales for teachers' pay for 2008-09 and the following two years.

Anticipated cost pressures for schools in Wales for the coming period

The Welsh Assembly Government does not collect this information. However, any costs pressures identified by schools would be highlighted as part of the Welsh Local Government Association's Sub Group Report to the Welsh Assembly Government for 2008-09 to 2010-2011. I attach a link to the document

<http://www.wlga.gov.uk/content.php?nID=371;pID=1553;IID=1>

Actual level and proportion of schools expenditure on teachers' pay in Wales - trends

With regard to historical data, there are no comparable figures available that would enable the STRB to get a rough estimate of recent increases in the teachers' pay bill.

Affordability of levels of pay award proposed by consultees

The delay to the announcement containing the results of the UK Comprehensive Spending Review means there is no information available on the likely funding in Wales for teachers' pay for 2008-09 and the following two years. We are therefore unable to comment on awards proposed by consultees until the budgets are set following the results of the CSR.

Local and Regional pay

Basis for your view that there is insufficient evidence at present to move towards local or regional pay: and that there should not be a move away from consistent rates of pay across England and Wales.

The Welsh Assembly Government believes that securing an increase in the use of existing flexibilities as detailed in the STRB's 16th report is the right course of action at this time. There is already considerable flexibility in the pay system. Local authorities and schools have considerable flexibility in the pay they can award to individual teachers or head teachers through the use of recruitment and retention incentives and benefits to ensure they can recruit and retain high quality staff. These payments could also take the form of other financial assistance, support or benefit, (for example help with housing, travel or childcare). The WAG believes that the flexibilities contained in the current pay structure are sufficient to allow pay to reflect local labour market conditions.

In order to ensure an increase in the use of flexibilities we will be supporting the work undertaken by RIG and or DCSF.

In addition, we do not believe the evidence suggests that a move to regionalisation of pay would solve the main problems, in that;

- Outside London and the South East the evidence suggests that differences in costs of living between regions are relatively modest.
- Once we have taken into account property prices, there is more variation in the cost of living within regions than between them. Whilst this points to the benefits of increased pay flexibility, regional pay does not seem to be the answer.

- Recruitment difficulties in the education sector seem to reflect a much wider range of factors than the cost of living. Indeed, it would appear, some of the greatest difficulties occur in disadvantaged areas where the cost of living is relatively low. Again, this would point toward a case for greater flexibility in setting pay, but not regional pay.
- In common with many other UK regions/countries, and in contrast to the position in many larger states, the boundaries between Wales and adjacent regions are extremely porous, with high commuting flows in each direction. This would make the definition of appropriate areas for regional adjustment especially problematic.

Unqualified Teachers

We have no further comments to make over and above those contained in our written evidence in that teachers' pay and conditions of service are not devolved and DCSF proposals contain no separate consequences for education in Wales.

Other consultees' submissions

We have no further comments to make over and above those contained in our written evidence.

Equality

Equal pay and other equality-related issues.

Under-representation of men and people from ethnic minorities in the teaching profession. Under-representation of women and people from ethnic minorities in leadership roles.

The Welsh Assembly Government initiated its 'Close the Pay Gap Campaign' in 2001. Since then it has had three distinct phases, the last one finishing at the end of March 2007. From the beginning, the campaign has been undertaken in partnership with the Equal Opportunities Commission and the Wales TUC.

Phase three of the campaign focussed on the public sector, in particular local authorities, health authorities and higher and further education institutions. All of which have a degree of local autonomy on the pay of their employees. The focus of the campaign was to continue raising the awareness of gender pay inequality as well as undertaking pay evaluations to identify any potential back pay issues.

Phase three of the campaign is currently being independently evaluated to:

- Consider the level of progress towards the aims and objectives of the phase;
- Evaluate the effectiveness and the value for money of the campaign and
- Consider the lessons learnt from the phase and suggest recommendations for future work.

None of the campaigns' phases have looked at the pay of teachers. This is because teachers pay is centrally controlled and back pay is not an issue.

There are of course other equality issues associated with education such as encouraging pupils into non traditional work roles, the gender gap in examination results (there was an article in the South Wales Echo dated 20 August stating that the Minister for Education has asked Estyn to look into this) and the lack of role models from under represented groups.

Links between pay and performance management

The Welsh Assembly Government's policy on performance management for teachers in Wales will continue to be designed to help improve teachers' development and effectiveness, rather than being a pay assessment tool.

The Minister wishes to update the performance management arrangements for teachers in Wales and is currently assessing the available options. There are no proposals aimed at specifically requiring a link between pay and performance management. However, performance management can inform decisions on pay in line with the recommendations of the STRB's 16 report.

It is hoped that an announcement on the direction of travel will be made in the near future.

Effectiveness of performance management in Schools

An evaluation of the performance management arrangements and the contribution of the arrangements to raising standards was published by ESTYN in 2006. The report was compiled on analysis undertaken in the school year 2003-2004 i.e. in the early years of introduction of performance management.

Despite the report being compiled relatively early after the introduction of performance management in Wales, ESTYN was able to draw up a number of findings and recommendations. The main findings are:

- Most schools have successfully introduced arrangements for performance management. In the majority of schools, there are good systems in place to develop and improve the work of teachers and head teachers. There are some problems in setting and agreeing objectives where staff are absent on a long-term basis, have been appointed temporarily or are job sharing.
- In some schools, it is possible to see that pupils have made gains in learning because teachers' objectives for pupils' progress are very specific.
- There is evidence to show that performance management arrangements are helping to improve teachers practice.
- In almost all schools, the setting of objectives for improving teacher practice is good or better.
- The introduction of a performance management process for schools is a positive development. However, there is scope for improving this process so that it can contribute more to developing a culture of continuous corporate improvement.

There was one recommendation for the Welsh Assembly Government

- In order to contribute further to effective practice the WAG should consider how the process can embrace a wider definition of performance management so that it can contribute more effectively to change management and corporate planning.

The findings and recommendations will be taken into account when the Welsh Assembly Government determines its direction of travel for performance management arrangements for teachers in Wales.