

Cyflwynwyd yr ymateb hwn i ymchwiliad y [Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg i weithredu diwygiadau addysg](#)

This response was submitted to the [Children, Young People and Education Committee inquiry into Implementation of education reforms](#)

IER 15

Ymateb gan: Pennaeth, Ysgol Gynradd Goetre Fawr

Response from: Head teacher, Goytre Fawr Primary School

Nodwch eich barn mewn perthynas â chylch gorchwyl yr ymchwiliad. | Record your views against the inquiry's terms of reference.

- *Implementation of the Curriculum for Wales in early years settings, primary schools and secondary schools*-a hugely burdensome, underfunded change that has been underpinned with massive lack of accountability in middle tiers. Everything has rested on school's shoulders with no one willing to commit to frameworks or models at the levels above us. The implementation, on the back of the pandemic, has been hugely stressful and increased workload massively for staff. The hidden costs of staff attendance at learning programmes and PL events, has not been funded sufficiently and has had a negative impact on our already pressurised budget.
- *The level of consistency and equity of learning opportunities for pupils across Wales, given the flexibility for schools to develop their own curricula within a national framework*-equity of learning has always been in place. It is not something that we have ever NOT considered. Our equity of learning revolves around curriculum opportunities, but also about standards in basic skills. Children from lower socio-economic backgrounds need more support in their literacy and maths than children from more affluent, involved homes. We focus hugely on allowing the lower ability children to be supported in accessing the curriculum through better developed LLC/MD/DCF skills, without which, they are adrift from peers and equity really is impacted. The lack of focus on maintaining and building on basic literacy/Numeracy/digital skills in some of the PL we have been surrounded with, is troubling, in this regard.

- *The associated reform of qualifications to align with the Curriculum for Wales- the consultation process was so difficult to access, even as an educationalist, that it would have put off the very people who needed to respond most i.e. those households struggling with basics. I feel that the increase in Welsh language qualifications and the shrinking of English GCSE from 2 to 1.5 of a GCSE, is horrifically ill thought through and negative for the South East Wales area. It will lead to a dumbing down of English literacy for our learners (including my daughter) and I am dismayed at the direction we are headed in, in that regard. I also think the shrinking of GCSE science to 2 from 3 and the amalgamation of specialist subjects will have a huge impact upon A-Level standards and offers, in an area already struggling. It puts Welsh learners at a disadvantage with their English counterparts.*
- *Implementation of the new Additional Learning Needs (ALN) system and the effective transfer of learners from the existing Special Educational Needs (SEN) system-my ALNCo's role has been hugely impacted. There has not been enough time, space or sufficient funding to allow us to do this in the way we need to. The workload increase and grey areas between LA and school, has been a theme that is very hard to manage. It has increased workload exponentially and calls in to question, the role of the LA in ALN reform.*
- *The application of the definition of ALN, compared to presently for SEN, and whether there is any 'raising of the bar' on the ground for determining eligibility for provision-I see no difference, other than more demanding, articulate, literate parents who understand the system better, having the ability to place more pressure on schools to fulfil a role previously undertaken by LA's. It is inequitable.*
- *The professional learning and other support settings are receiving to ensure effective implementation of the Curriculum for Wales and the ALN system-this is my largest problem. There is "white noise" in the system, that gets louder at every tier. We need a commitment to providing frameworks and models. Our teachers are supposed to deliver 6 and half hours to children, then attend professional meetings, then design curricula AND assessment models, with only one added day of INSET a year. It's not reasonable, without the middle tiers actually committing to simplified implementation models that we can populate, amend and make bespoke. The length of PL programmes also mean that schools' budgets are directly impacted and classes who need their teachers are deprived of that.*
- *Other factors potentially affecting implementation of the Curriculum for Wales and the ALN system, for example levels of funding and fall out from the pandemic-we need to*

recognise that the educational and societal landscape post-pandemic, are massively different. The behavioural and socialisation issues we have seen, and the parental attitude to attendance and punctuality, has been difficult to cope with. Adding the CfW and ALNET pressures, has been sapping to all staff. The level of funding has led to us having to make 2.5 TA's redundant in a single form entry school. It has been heartbreaking. These women are the backbone of our school and of their families. We have single parent women who are sole breadwinners in their family, in tears as a result. Next year, outside of identified 1:1 key workers for IDP pupils, there will be little direct support to class teachers as a result of the budget cuts. The most vulnerable pupils will have 2 and half fewer people to support their learning and wellbeing. When you see the bloated middle tiers in Wales and the funding that underpins them, it's galling. We can't keep the system as it currently stands. The pandemic levels of funding were so appreciated and needed, but we need to maintain similar levels to implement CfW and ALNET and deliver on equity and wellbeing (including staff). I have been 30 years in education and 11 as a HT, and the current position is as bleak as any in my career. It is dispiriting. We need honesty and a removal of politics from our wider system, or it will impact upon the lives of vulnerable people at every tier of the chalk face provision.

The particular challenges and opportunities facing different types of schools in varying circumstances (e.g. language medium, demographics and locality) in terms of implementing curriculum and ALN reform.