
Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru
Y Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg

National Assembly for Wales
Children, Young People and Education Committee

Kirsty Williams AM
Cabinet Secretary for Education
By Email

6 July 2018

Dear Kirsty

Thank you for attending the meeting of the Children, Young People and Education Committee on 28 June 2018. The Committee found the session interesting and useful in scrutinising the Welsh Government's progress against several areas of policy, including some of the ten education priorities you agreed with the First Minister in June 2016.

The Committee would, however, like to follow up on a number of areas of questioning from the meeting and confirm a number of items of information you said you would provide to the Committee.

Support for Minority Ethnic and Gypsy, Roma and Traveller learners

As you are aware from its *Education Improvement Grant: Gypsy, Roma and Traveller, and Minority Ethnic Children* inquiry, the Committee has emphasised the importance of supporting these groups of learners as, in the case of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller learners in particular, they are a very disadvantaged group and have comparatively low attainment.

The Committee welcomes the Welsh Government's decision to allocate £8.5 million transitional funding to support these groups of learners to mitigate the removal of £13.1 million from the 2018–19 Education Improvement Grant. You



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have said it is your intention to provide a further £8.7 million transitional funding in 2019–20.

However, the Committee believes that the need for the Welsh Government to do this, after initially removing the funding to make resources available within the Local Government Settlement to protect school budgets, indicates the initial decision's considerable shortcomings. The same concerns are shared by the Committee in the case of the cessation of the £700,000 School Uniform Grant and subsequent replacement with a £1.7 million PDG Access fund. The Committee believes that it would have been better to use money from the reserves at the outset to supplement local government funding to schools, rather than taking it from education grants and then drawing on the reserves to reinstate such grant funding.

Only £5 million of the £8.7 million transitional funding for 2018–19 was documented in the 1st Supplementary Budget 2018–19, announced on 19 June 2018. You confirmed that the remaining £3.7 million will be accounted for in the 2nd Supplementary Budget and will be found from either within the Education MEG or from the central reserves.

During the meeting of 28 June 2018, you agreed to provide:

- Copies of any impact assessments, including a Child Rights Impact Assessments (CRIA) undertaken in respect of decisions to change the way support for Minority Ethnic and Gypsy, Roma and Traveller learners is provided;
- A note on the position of traveller education services across Wales, e.g. changes in staff numbers and local authorities' funding of this service area.



Infant class sizes

During the discussion on your priority of reducing infant class sizes, you agreed to provide:

- A note on the business cases submitted by local authorities for the £16 million Revenue element of the funding to reduce infant class sizes and how these compared to the amounts allocated;
- A note on the breakdown of the allocation of the £20 million Capital element of the funding;
- A note on the terms and conditions of the Revenue and Capital elements of the funding to reduce infant class sizes;
- Figures on how many infant classes contain more than 25 pupils at present, how many pupils are in those classes and the corresponding position after the duration of the lifetime of this policy (this Assembly term).

New Curriculum for Wales

The Committee is grateful for your letter dated 26 June 2018, issued alongside your Cabinet Statement of the same day, providing references and links to various sources of information. You indicated that you would send the Committee any further information on content of the new Areas of Learning and Experience (AoLE) as it emerges. We look forward to receiving any other such information that might be available.

During the meeting you confirmed that you thought primary legislation in relation to the new curriculum would be introduced in year 4 of the Welsh Government's legislative programme. The Committee would be grateful if you could provide further detail on the Welsh Government's current plans for introducing primary legislation to establish the new Curriculum for Wales.



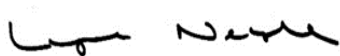
Supply teaching

The Committee noted from your oral evidence that you did not intend to move towards a system of having a national supply teaching model despite the devolution of teachers' pay and conditions. You will be aware that in the Fourth Assembly, our predecessor Committee undertook an inquiry into Supply Teaching. The overarching recommendation called on the Welsh Government to look at options for the employment of supply teachers, including through a national body.

The Committee looks forward to considering these issues in more detail when it undertakes a further inquiry into supply teaching in due course. In the meantime, the Committee would be grateful if you could provide information on the following:

- A brief overview of the options the Welsh Government is considering for future models of supply teaching provision;
- The precise nature of teachers' employment, i.e. whether they are employed by individual schools or local authorities;
- To what extent there is any evidence that there is a higher use/reliance on supply teachers in schools with deprived catchments and/or working in challenging circumstances.

Yours sincerely



Lynne Neagle AC / AM
Cadeirydd / Chair

