



Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru **The National Assembly for Wales**

Y Pwyllgor Plant a Phobl Ifanc **The Children and Young People Committee**

Dydd Iau, 21 Chwefror 2013
Thursday, 21 February 2013

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Cofnodir y trafodion hyn yn yr iaith y llefarwyd hwy ynddi yn y pwyllgor. Yn ogystal,
cynhwysir trawsgrifiad o'r cyfieithu ar y pryd.

These proceedings are reported in the language in which they were spoken in the committee.
In addition, a transcription of the simultaneous interpretation is included.

Aelodau'r pwyllgor yn bresennol**Committee members in attendance**

Christine Chapman	Llafur (Cadeirydd y Pwyllgor) Labour (Committee Chair)
Suzy Davies	Ceidwadwyr Cymreig Welsh Conservatives
Rebecca Evans	Llafur Labour
Bethan Jenkins	Plaid Cymru The Party of Wales
Lynne Neagle	Llafur Labour
Jenny Rathbone	Llafur Labour
Aled Roberts	Democratiaid Rhyddfrydol Cymru Welsh Liberal Democrats
Simon Thomas	Plaid Cymru The Party of Wales

Eraill yn bresennol**Others in attendance**

Simon Brown	Cyfarwyddwr Strategol, Estyn Strategic Director, Estyn
Ann Keane	Prif Arolygydd Addysg a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales
Caroline Rawson	Cyfarwyddwr Cynorthwyol, SNAP Cymru Assistant Director, SNAP Cymru
Meilyr Rowlands	Cyfarwyddwr Strategol, Estyn Strategic Director, Estyn

Swyddogion Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru yn bresennol**National Assembly for Wales officials in attendance**

Steve Davies	Cynghorydd Cyfreithiol Legal Adviser
Michael Dauncey	Gwasanaeth Ymchwil Research Service
Ffion Emyr Bourton	Dirprwy Glerc Deputy Clerk
Claire Morris	Clerc Clerk
Siân Thomas	Gwasanaeth Ymchwil Research Service

*Dechreuodd y cyfarfod am 9.15 a.m.
The meeting began at 9.15 a.m.*

**Cyflwyniad, Ymddiheuriadau a Dirprwyon
Introduction, Apologies and Substitutions**

[1] **Christine Chapman:** Good morning and welcome to the Assembly's Children and Young People Committee. I remind Members to switch off any mobile phones or BlackBerrys because they affect the transmission. We have received an apology from Julie Morgan.

9.16 a.m.

Craffu ar Adroddiad Blynyddol Estyn 2011-2012
Scrutiny of Estyn's Annual Report 2011-2012

[2] **Christine Chapman:** I welcome Ann Keane, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales, and Simon Brown and Meilyr Rowlands, who are both strategic directors at Estyn, to the meeting this morning. Members will have had the opportunity to read the report in full, so if you are happy to do so, we will go straight into questions. I see that you are happy to do so.

[3] I want to start off with a very important issue, namely standards in primary and secondary schools. To what extent does the reduction in the proportion of schools receiving good or excellent judgments indicate a decline in the performance of schools in Wales?

[4] **Ms Keane:** That is quite a difficult question to answer. There are issues about the statistical significance of the numbers of schools involved. In Estyn, we take roughly a sixth of the total number of providers, including schools in Wales, and we inspect them. So, we inspect a different number of schools and a different set of schools annually. The number of schools inspected in the secondary phase is around 35. Any shift in terms of the numbers being inadequate, unsatisfactory or excellent is so small as to make it impossible to say with assurance that there is a statistically significant decline.

[5] The number of schools inspected is larger for primary schools, because we inspect around 250 of those annually. Again, we are talking about them being about six percentage points adrift this year from the numbers last year. That is at the margins of being statistically significant. So, we cannot say with certainty that the slightly lower overall numbers of primary and secondary schools being good or excellent this year is a very significant decline.

[6] **Christine Chapman:** You said that there are differences between secondary and primary. Is there greater concern about the performance of secondary schools in comparison with primary schools?

[7] **Ms Keane:** The biggest concern with primary is the very low number of schools that are excellent. We have a larger proportion of secondary schools that are excellent—one in seven—but we also have one in seven that are unsatisfactory. So, we have a greater polarisation of standards in secondary, whereas the distribution curve is a more normal one in primary schools.

[8] **Christine Chapman:** We will delve into this in more detail. I will bring Simon Thomas in first.

[9] **Simon Thomas:** Cyn mynd i mewn i fanylder, hoffwn gael trosolwg dros gyfnod. Yn ogystal ag edrych ar adroddiad eleni edrychais ar hen adroddiadau Estyn yn mynd yn ôl sawl blwyddyn. Mae'n nodweddiadol bod yr ieithwedd wedi newid; roedd yn weddol bositif hyd at 2009, lle roedd yr adroddiad diwethaf gan Dr Bill Maxwell yn sôn am dystiolaeth o gynnydd cadarnhaol i'w weld, yn sôn am gynnydd sylweddol yn y graddau uchaf mewn ysgolion uwchradd, a bod nodweddion rhagorol i'w gweld mewn arweinyddiaeth a rheolaeth strategol. Nodwyd problemau hefyd, ond roedd yr

Simon Thomas: Before I go into detail, I would like to have an overview over a period. As well as looking at this year's report, I also looked at old reports by Estyn going back a number of years. It is characteristic that the language has changed; it was quite positive up until 2009, where the last report by Dr Bill Maxwell mentioned evidence of positive improvement, substantial progress in the higher grades in secondary schools, and excellent features within strategic leadership and management. Problems were also identified, but the language was more positive regarding progress and that things

ieithwedd yn fwy positif ynglŷn â chynydd a phethau'n gwella. Ers hynny, mae newid wedi bod. Nid wyf yn gwybod ai'r fframwaith arolygu cyffredin sy'n gyfrifol am hynny, ond hoffwn glywed gennych a ydych wedi mynd yn fwy llym neu'n fwy cadarn yn y ffordd rydych yn arolygu, neu a yw rhywbeth sylweddol wedi digwydd yn yr ysgolion eu hunain. I beth fydddech yn priodoli'r hyn yr wyf wedi'i weld i fod yn batrwm yn yr adroddiadau dros y blynyddoedd?

[10] **Ms Keane:** Mae model y fframwaith arolygu wedi newid. Mae'r model yn edrych yn fwy manwl ar safonau sylfaenol mewn llythrennedd a rhifedd. Rydym wedi gwneud llythrennedd a rhifedd yn ffocws ynghyd â data. Ceir rhai sgil effeithiau o newid ffocws y fframwaith. Fodd bynnag, yn fy marn i—rwyf wedi bod yn gweithio yn Estyn ers rhai blynyddoedd—mae'r canfyddiadau sydd gennym ar hyn o bryd yn fwy realistig o ran ble y mae'r ysgolion mewn gwirionedd.

[11] Rydym wedi gweld sawl peth yn digwydd dros 10 mlynedd. Rydym wedi gweld safonau mewn asesiadau allanol yn gostwng o ran cyrhaeddiad disgyblion. Rydym hefyd wedi gweld canlyniadau'r Rhaglen Ryngwladol Asesu Myfyrwyr. Yn fy marn i, mae'r ffordd yr ydym yn awr yn canolbwyntio ar bethau sylfaenol fel rhifedd a llythrennedd—sy'n hanfodol bwysig i bob math o addysgu ar draws pob pwnc yn y byd addysg—yn fwy realistig o ran rhoi'r neges i chi a Llywodraeth Cymru o ran ble y mae'n hysgolion yng Nghymru ar hyn o bryd. Byddwn yn dweud ein bod yn fwy cadarn a'n bod wedi newid y ffocws, ond mae'r canfyddiadau yn awr yn fwy realistig.

[12] **Simon Thomas:** A fyddai'n iawn dweud, felly, eich bod yn awr yn rhoi mwy o bwyslais ar ffactorau fel llythrennedd a rhifedd, lle yn y gorffennol, efallai, roedd pethau fel gweithdrefnau yn cael eu sgorio'n uwch, fel petai?

[13] **Ms Keane:** Mae hynny'n gywir. Hefyd, roeddem yn rhoi mwy o sylw yn ein harsylwadau mewn dosbarthiadau i gyraeddiadau ym mhynciau'r cwricwlwm cenedlaethol. Roeddem yn rhoi tipyn o sylw,

were improving. Since then, there has been a change. I do not know whether the common inspection framework is responsible for that, but I would like to hear from you whether you have become more stringent or robust in the way that you conduct inspection, or whether something significant has happened in the schools themselves. To what would you attribute what I perceive to be a pattern in reports over the years?

Ms Keane: The inspection framework model has changed. The model looks in more detail at basic standards in literacy and numeracy. We have made literacy and numeracy a focus along with data. There are certain impacts of changing the focus of the framework. However, in my opinion—I have been working at Estyn for a number of years—the findings that we have at present are more realistic with regard to where schools actually are.

We have seen a number of things happening over a period of 10 years. We have seen standards in external assessments declining with regard to pupil achievement. We have also seen the results of the Programme for International Student Assessment. In my opinion, the way that we are now concentrating on the basic things like numeracy and literacy—things that are fundamentally important to all sorts of learning across all subjects in education—is more realistic in giving a clear picture to you and the Welsh Government regarding where our schools stand at present. I would say that we are more robust and that we have changed the focus, but the findings are now more realistic.

Simon Thomas: Would it be right to say, therefore, that you are now giving more weight to factors like literacy and numeracy, whereas in the past, perhaps, things like procedures were being scored more highly?

Ms Keane: That would be correct. In our classroom inspections, we were also giving greater attention to achievement in the subjects of the national curriculum. We were, therefore, giving a great deal of weight to the

felly, i gynnwys y gwersi hanes, er enghraifft, o ran yr hanes yr oedd yn cael ei ddysgu, ac i gynnwys y gwersi daearyddiaeth o ran y ddaearyddiaeth yr oedd yn cael ei ddysgu. Bellach, yr hyn yr ydym yn ei wneud yw edrych ar y medrau sy'n gyffredin i bob pwnc, sef y gallu i ddeall a defnyddio iaith yn fwyfwy soffistigedig o fewn cyd-destun y pwnc, ond hefyd y gallu i wneud hynny'n annibynnol ac i ddefnyddio iaith yn arbennig; heb iaith, nid oes mynediad at unrhyw bwnc.

[14] Un canlyniad o newid ffocws yw bod y canfyddiadau yn edrych yn fwy beirniadol. Fodd bynnag, fy marn broffesiynol i yw ein bod yn dod â chanfyddiadau mwy realistig o ran ble y mae'r ysgolion arni. Os ydych yn edrych yn fanwl ar adroddiadau'r sectorau—y sector uwchradd, er enghraifft—oherwydd y gwahaniaethu rhwng y goreuon a'r gwaethaf yn y sector uwchradd, rydym wedi manylu ar y sector hwnnw i egluro beth y mae'r ysgolion rhagorol yn ei wneud, beth y mae'r ysgolion sy'n ganolig yn ei wneud a beth sydd o'i le ar yr ysgolion sydd dim ond yn cyrraedd y lefel anfodddhaol neu ddigonol. Credaf, felly, ein bod yn rhoi lot mwy o fanylion i'r ysgolion ynglŷn â'r hyn sy'n digwydd.

[15] Un peth arall y byddwn yn ei ddweud fel tystiolaeth o fod yn deg yw bod yr ysgolion, ar y cyfan, yn derbyn ein canfyddiadau. Nid ydym yn cael mwy o gwynion yn awr nag oeddem yn eu cael yn y gorffennol. Rwy'n priodoli hynny i'r ffaith ein bod yn fwy cadarn yn y fframwaith, a hefyd ein bod wedi tynnu'r broses arolygu i mewn a'n bod yn arwain yr arolygiadau ein hunain, gan fwyaf.

[16] **Aled Roberts:** Hoffwn ofyn cwestiwn sy'n seiliedig ar fy mhrofiad fel cadeirydd llywodraethwyr. Nid wyf yn cwestiynu'r ffaith fod yr asesiadau'n fwy realistig, ond fel yr ydych wedi'i dderbyn, efallai bod yr hen arolygon yn seiliedig ar fwy o brofiad o fewn y dosbarth. Mae'n ymddangos yn awr bod yr arolwg yn seiliedig ar ddata sydd wedi cael eu casglu cyn yr arolwg, a'ch bod yn edrych am dystiolaeth fod y data'n adlewyrchiad teg o'r safonau o fewn yr ysgol; a yw hynny'n gywir? Os yw hynny'n gywir, a oes cwestiynau'n codi

content of history lessons, regarding the history being taught, for example, or to the content of geography lessons, regarding the geography being taught. What we now do is look at the skills that are common to all subjects, namely the ability to use and understand language in an increasingly sophisticated way in the context of the subject, but also the ability to do this independently and to the use of language in particular; without language, there is no access to any subject.

One outcome of changing focus has been that the findings seem to be more critical. However, my professional opinion is that we are now providing more realistic outcomes with regard to where schools actually stand. If you look at the sector reports—for example, the secondary sector—because of the differences between those at the top and bottom of the secondary sector, we have concentrated on that sector and have explained what those excellent schools are doing, what the schools in the middle band are doing and what is wrong with the inadequate or adequate schools. We are, therefore, providing a great deal more detail to schools regarding what is happening.

One other thing that I would say as evidence of us behaving fairly is that, for the most part, schools accept our conclusions. We are not getting any more complaints now than we received in the past. I attribute that to the fact that we are more robust in our framework, but also that we have drawn in the inspection process and that we lead the inspections ourselves, for the most part.

Aled Roberts: I wish to ask a question that is based on my experience as a chair of governors. I do not question the fact that the assessments are, perhaps, more realistic now, but you have already accepted that the old inspections were based on greater experience in the classroom. It now appears that the inspection is based on data that have been collected before the inspection, and that you are looking for evidence of whether the data are a fair reflection of standards in the school; is that correct? If so, do questions arise in relation to how realistic that information is if

yn glŷn â pha mor realistig yw'r data os yw'n seiliedig ar asesiadau mewnol athrawon yr ydych wedi bod yn feirniadol ohonynt yn y gorffennol?

it is based on internal assessment by teachers, of which you have been critical in the past?

[17] **Ms Keane:** Rydym yn cychwyn gyda dadansoddiad o'r data—y canlyniadau asesiadau ac ati—cyn mynd i'r ysgol i arolygu. Mae cwestiynau yn codi o'r data, ac rydym yn dilyn y cwestiynau hynny yn yr arolygiad. Mae dwy agwedd ar bob arolygiad. Un yw'r hyn yr ydym yn ei alw'n gyrrhaeddiad, sef, ar gyfer yr uwchradd, canlyniadau asesiadau allanol gan fwyaf. Yr ail yw cyflawniad, sef yr hyn yr ydym yn ei weld yn y dosbarth. Pan ydym yn mynd i unrhyw ddsbarth, beth bynnag fo'r pwnc, rydym yn gofyn y cwestiwn: beth ddylai'r plant hyn, o ran lefel eu gallu, fod yn medru ei wneud yn y dosbarth hwn? I wneud yr arfarniadau hynny, mae'r arolygwyr yn defnyddio eu gwybodaeth fanwl o beth sy'n digwydd yn ysgolion eraill Cymru, ac maent yn defnyddio nid yn unig eu profiad hwy cyn ymuno â'r arolygiaeth, ond eu gwybodaeth gyfredol o beth yw'r safonau mewn ysgolion eraill. Felly, mewn ysgol mewn ardal ddifreintiedig, er enghraifft, rydym yn gofyn cwestiynau yn glŷn â pham nad yw'r ysgol hon yn gallu cyrraedd cystal ag ysgol arall sydd â'r un ganran o brydau ysgol am ddim, er enghraifft. Cwestiynau fel hynny sy'n dod i'r fei gennym. Mae'r tîm wedyn yn trafod hynny.

Ms Keane: We start with an analysis of the data—the assessment outcomes and so forth—before we conduct a review in school. The data raise questions, and we follow up those questions in the inspection. There are two aspects to every inspection. One is what we call achievement, which, for the secondary sector, is based mainly on the results of external examinations. The second is attainment, which is what we see in the classroom. When we enter a classroom, whatever the subject matter, we ask the question: what should these children be able to achieve within this classroom setting? To make those evaluations, inspectors use their detailed knowledge of what happens in other schools in Wales. They use not only their experiences before they joined the inspectorate, but also their up-to-date information of what standards are in other schools. Therefore, in a school in a disadvantaged area, for example, we ask questions about why this school does not achieve as well as another school with the same percentage of free school meals, for example. Those are the sorts of questions that we ask. The team, then, discusses those issues.

[18] Nid ydym yn mynd i ysgol a dod i gasgliadau ar sail data yn unig. Rydym hefyd yn edrych ar waith disgyblion ac yn gwranddo arnynt a gofyn cwestiynau iddynt am y gwaith er mwyn gweld sut maen nhw wedi meistroli'r cwricwlwm, a ydynt yn deall y gwaith a beth yw eu hymateb i'r dysgu a'r addysgu. Felly, mae tystiolaeth yn dod o nifer o wahanol ffynonellau. Wedyn, rydym yn gwneud yr hyn yr ydym yn ei alw'n *triangulation*, sef nodi yr hyn yr ydym ni yn ei gredu sy'n wir am safonau mewn ysgol ac edrych ar y dystiolaeth. Wedyn, mae'r tîm yn trafod ac yn dod i gasgliad yn glŷn â'r arfarniadau yn yr ysgol honno.

We do not go into schools and come to conclusions based on data alone. We also look at pupils' work, we listen to them and ask them questions about their work to see whether they have mastered the curriculum and whether they understand what is being taught and what their reaction is to the teaching and learning. So, evidence from a number of different sources is taken into account. Then, we do what we call triangulation, where we say what we believe is the truth about the standards in the school and we consider the evidence. Then, the team will discuss that and will come to a conclusion about the evaluations in that school.

[19] Roeddech wedyn yn gofyn cwestiwn am yr asesiadau a'u hygredd. Buaswn i'n dweud bod hygredd yn asesiadau allanol lle

You then asked a question about the assessments and their credibility. I would say that the credibility of external assessments

mae yna elfen o safoni, fel yng nghyfnod allweddol 3 a 4, yn ddibynadwy. Serch hynny, rydym wedi bod yn feirniadol o asesiadau athrawon yn y cynradd. Wedi dweud hynny, un o'r pethau rydym yn ei wneud yn yr arolygiad yw gofyn a yw'r asesiadau hyn a'r data yr ydym wedi ei weld cyn dod yn cyfateb i'r hyn yr ydym yn ei weld yn y dosbarth. Felly, mae gennym gyfres o *checks*. Rydym wedyn yn casglu'r holl dystiolaeth at ei gilydd, ac mae'r tîm yn dod at ei gilydd ac yn dod i arfarniad proffesiynol.

[20] **Aled Roberts:** O ran yr ysgolion cynradd, beth yw canran yr ysgolion hynny lle nad yw'r asesiadau yn y data yr ydych wedi ei gael o flaen llaw yn adlewyrchiad teg o'r safonau yr ydych yn eu gweld pan ydych yn mynd i ddosbarthiadau?

[21] **Ms Keane:** Byddwn i'n dweud ei fod yn lleiafrif, ond un sylweddol.

[22] **Mr Rowlands:** Yr unig beth fyddwn i'n ei ychwanegu ynglŷn â'r fethodoleg arolygu yw bod yna rhwyfaint o ddilyniant rhwng y cylch hwn a'r cylch blaenorol. Yn y cylch blaenorol, roedd tri math o arolwg: un byr, un safonol neu un llawn. Bellach, rydym wedi symud at system lle mae pob ysgol yn cael arolygiad craidd. Mae hwnnw'n debyg iawn o ran methodoleg i'r arolygiad byr yn y system flaenorol. Felly, yn dibynnu ar ganlyniad yr arolygiad hwnnw, gellir cynnal arolwg dilynol—neu ddim—yn y cylch presennol. Mae'r fethodoleg yr ydym yn awr yn ei dilyn yn debyg iawn i beth oedd nifer o ysgolion yn ei gael yn y cylch blaenorol. Mewn ysgol gynradd, mae'n ddigon rhwydd i'r tîm gael gweld pob un o'r athrawon yn dysgu. Rydym yn teimlo'n hyderus bod hynny'n wir. Mewn ysgol uwchradd, nid oedd yn bosibl, hyd yn oed mewn arolwg llawn yn y gorffennol, i weld bob athro yn dysgu. Yn sicr, nid yw'n bosibl yn yr arolygon byr. Felly, er bod y cylch hwn yn wahanol mewn nifer o ffyrdd, ceir rhywfaint o ddilyniant mewn methodoleg hefyd.

9.30 a.m.

[23] **Suzy Davies:** I wanted to ask you a little more about your methodology. If I understand this correctly, this is the second year of a rolling programme of inspections. So,

where there is an element of standardisation, such as in key stage 3 and 4, have been reliable. However, we have been critical of the teacher assessments in the primary sector. Having said that, one of the things that we have asked, and we have seen the data before we carry out the inspection, is whether what we have seen in the data corresponds to what we see in the classroom. So, we have a series of checks in place. We then collate all that evidence, and the team comes together and comes to a professional judgement on that school.

Aled Roberts: In terms of primary schools, what is the percentage of those schools where the assessments in the data that you have seen beforehand is not a fair reflection of the standards that you see when you go into the classes?

Ms Keane: I would say that it is a minority, but a significant minority.

Mr Rowlands: The only thing that I would add about the inspection methodology is that there is some correlation between this cycle and the previous cycle. In the previous cycle, there were three types of inspection: a short inspection, a standard inspection and a full inspection. We have now moved towards a system where each school has a core inspection. That is similar in terms of methodology to the short inspection in the previous system. Therefore, depending on the outcome of the core inspection, a follow-up inspection may, or may not, be conducted in the current cycle. The methodology that we now follow is similar to what a number of schools were having in the previous cycle. In a primary school, it is quite easy for the team to see every teacher teaching. We feel confident that that is true. In secondary schools, it was not possible, even during a full inspection in the past, to see every teacher teaching. Certainly, it is not possible in the short inspections. Therefore, although this cycle is different in many ways, there is some degree of continuity in methodology as well.

effectively, you have inspected a third of schools for the purposes of this. If I go on to the triangulation methodology that you were just talking about, can you confirm that the sixth of schools that you have seen this year broadly reflect the whole of Wales, and that you have also taken, as best you can, a socioeconomic mix that could be replicated in the next four years?

[24] **Ms Keane:** They reflect the pattern since the early 1990s when the first cycle of these inspections started. As a result of having to inspect the schools at six-year intervals, the mix is roughly the same every year. It is not exactly the same, but roughly the same. They were originally designed to give a geographical spread and a spread in size and type of schools across Wales.

[25] **Suzy Davies:** So, when you are comparing in the current inspection framework, are you only using schools inspected in the like-for-like comparison last year, or are you using a like-for-like comparison for schools that you have not inspected under this new framework yet? If you are doing a like-for-like comparison, how are you doing that when two thirds of Wales still has a list of data results based on an old framework and when you are now inspecting schools in a new framework? How can you be sure that you are using like-for-like data in coming to your conclusions? I do not know whether that is clear. How can a new framework use information from an old framework for comparison purposes?

[26] **Ms Keane:** We are using a different perspective on the information. The data, of course, is the same in the sense that teacher assessment outcomes, outcomes from GCSE examinations and other sets of qualifications, attendance data and data on pupil exclusions would be similar, if not exactly the same, as they were in the past. What I am saying is that there has been a recalibration of the framework itself. The biggest difference in content in terms of substance is the one that I referred to earlier, which is that we no longer look at each subject in the curriculum, come to a grade judgment on each subject and then try to piece that together. Rather, what we have asked is, 'What are the generic skills that underlie all our education and what do we want our young people to be able to do when they leave school?'. We need all the young people to be literate and numerate, because these are generic, transferrable skills that will help them whether they are going to be brain surgeons or car mechanics. In other words, these skills are fundamental to study across all subjects. A certain level of literacy is essential to understand the study of any subject. Therefore, we have shifted the focus and by doing that we have revealed a disappointing level of literacy and numeracy in a significant minority of schools.

[27] **Suzy Davies:** Thank you, that has made that clear. Looking ahead to the last six that you will be inspecting in four years' time, they are going to know now that the focus is on literacy and numeracy. It is not a secret, obviously, but they will have had the opportunity to up their game in those intervening few years.

[28] **Ms Keane:** That is the point of inspections by the way.

[29] **Suzy Davies:** I appreciate that.

[30] **Ms Keane:** I would be pleased if that happens.

[31] **Suzy Davies:** I would hope so, as well. However, if you have two schools in the same area—one of which was inspected last year, and one that will be inspected in four years' time—the one that will be inspected in four years' time will have an advantage, given that it will know what you are all looking for now. How will that affect parental choice in a particular area, if they have that choice in the first place, of course? Some areas do not have that choice.

[32] **Ms Keane:** I would argue strongly that it should have been the duty of those schools to get literacy and numeracy right in the first place. They should not have needed to wait for Estyn to come along and point out the deficiencies.

[33] **Suzy Davies:** I do not disagree.

[34] **Ms Keane:** Anything that we do to make those standards better for pupils in the final year of this cycle is justifiable. I think that you are right. What you have noted is an important point, namely that there is no absolute way that we can apply standards in inspection in a vacuum, so that everyone unexpectedly gets these set standards applied to them without previous knowledge. There is no way in practice or in real life that we can do that. Nor is there a way in which we can rank-order schools all together and in a way that would be totally fair. However, the common inspection framework, and what we look at, will change over the course of the cycle in any case, because new initiatives come on stream. We will have the national support programme; we will have the test results now from the reading tests and the number tests; and we now have the literacy and numeracy framework. So, all the time, Government is putting initiatives in place that should help schools to perform better in Estyn inspections as we go forward.

[35] Testament to the fact that this framework is working is that we are seeing, when we go on follow-up inspections, that schools have worked really hard to meet our new framework standards, and I see that as a good thing. If they get through the follow-up—as most of them are doing, apart from the 7% in statutory categories—then they come up, because they are doing that work, responding to our recommendations and putting the effort into literacy and numeracy. So, for me, the framework is working.

[36] **Suzy Davies:** Finally, say that you have a school that was found to be unsatisfactory last year or this year, by the time we come to the end of the six-year cycle and it has improved, will it have had the opportunity to publish the fact that it has improved?

[37] **Ms Keane:** Yes. In the follow-up inspection, which Meilyr just mentioned, we have changed the core plus the follow-up inspection. We went back last year to 45% of the schools that we inspected in the first year. The vast majority of those schools came out of follow-up inspection, and that fact will be published.

[38] **Suzy Davies:** Right; so those schools had the opportunity to—

[39] **Ms Keane:** Yes.

[40] **Suzy Davies:** They sit their exams, almost.

[41] **Ms Keane:** Yes. That would be the advantage—

[42] **Simon Thomas:** That is not allowed anymore.

[43] **Ms Keane:** Another advantage is that they do not sit in follow-up forever. If they have done the work, we will go back and monitor them on that. If they have not, we will go back again, and when they have made those efforts to meet the recommendations to our satisfaction, they come out of follow-up and then parents can be reassured.

[44] **Suzy Davies:** Lovely. Thank you very much.

[45] **Christine Chapman:** We have a quick question from Simon Thomas.

[46] **Simon Thomas:** Mae'n gwestiwn **Simon Thomas:** It is a very brief question.

byr iawn. Rydych wedi trafod yn y gorffennol arolygiadau ar hap. A yw hynny'n ystyriaeth o hyd yn y fframwaith hwn?

You have discussed ad hoc inspections in the past. Is that still a consideration in this framework?

[47] **Ms Keane:** Mae ymgynghoriad ar hyn o bryd a fydd yn rhoi hyblygrwydd i ni i arolygu ar hap.

Ms Keane: There is a consultation at the moment that will give us the flexibility to carry out inspections without notice.

[48] **Simon Thomas:** Mae hwnnw'n rhan o'r hyn ddywedodd Suzy.

Simon Thomas: That relates to what Suzy said.

[49] **Mr Rowlands:** Roeddwn yn mynd i ddweud hynny. Mae arolygiad ar y cyd rhngom ni a'r Llywodraeth, fel na fydd ysgolion yn gwybod pryd y cânt eu harolygu. Rhan o'r ateb a roddodd Ann yw bod yn rhaid i ni ar hyn o bryd arolygu ysgol mewn trefn benodol. Ni fedrwn newid y drefn mewn unrhyw ffordd.

Mr Rowlands: That is what I was going to say. There is a joint inspection between us and the Government, so that schools will not have notice of when they are to be inspected. Part of the answer that Ann gave is that we must at present inspect schools in a particular order. We cannot mix that up in any way.

[50] Rwy'n credu eich bod yn hollol iawn i ddweud y byddai'n anodd cymharu canlyniadau arolygiad un cylch â rhai o gylch arall—mae hynny'n wir. Mae hefyd yn wir am bob cylch yr ydym wedi ei wneud yn y gorffennol, a hwn yw'r pedwerydd. Mae ysgolion yn cwyno os ydynt ar ddechrau cylch, ond maent hefyd yn cwyno os ydynt yn niwedd cylch, gan ddweud ei bod yn anos gael canlyniadau da o fod ar ddiwedd cylch. Felly, ar y cyfan, nid yw eich lleoliad chi yn y cylch yn gwneud lot fawr o wahaniaeth. Ac o ofyn i ysgol, 'Ble liciwch chi fod: ar ddechrau neu ar ddiwedd y cylch?', mae'n ffael penderfynu, achos mae manteision ac anfanteision i'r ddau leoliad mewn gwirionedd.

You are quite right in saying that it would be difficult to compare the inspection results from one cycle with those of another—that is true. That is also true of every cycle that we have undertaken in the past, and this is the fourth. Schools complain if they are among the first to undergo inspection in the cycle, but they also complain if they are at the end of the cycle, because they say it is more difficult to achieve good results at the end of a cycle. So, on the whole, one's position in the cycle does not make a great deal of difference. If you ask a school, 'Where would you like to be: at the beginning or the end of the cycle?', it will not be able to decide, because there are advantages and disadvantages to both positions, truth be told.

[51] **Ms Keane:** Hoffwn ddweud un peth. Mae gan y prif arolygydd hawl i arolygu yn ddirybudd ar hyn o bryd, a gwnaethom hynny yn yr unedau cyfeirio disgyblion yn gynharach yn y flwyddyn. Y broblem yw mai hyn a hyn o adnoddau sydd gennyf, a chan fod rhaid i ni gadw at y rheol chwe blynedd, mae'r adnoddau yn mynd at hynny. Felly, ar sail eithriad yn unig y gallwn wneud hynny ar hyn o bryd, ond mae gennyf yr hawl i wneud hynny.

Ms Keane: I would like to say one thing more. The chief inspector does have the right to carry out inspections without notice at the moment, and we did just that with the pupil referral units earlier in the year. The problem is that my resources are finite, and given that we have to keep to the six-year rule, the resources are taken up by that. So, only as a matter of exception can we do that at present, but I do have the right to do that.

[52] **Bethan Jenkins:** Rwyf am symud ymlaen i drafod ysgolion arbennig. A ydych yn hyderus nad oes unrhyw bryderon ynghylch safonau yr ysgolion hynny? Sylwais fod y sampl o'r hyn yr ydych yn ei

Bethan Jenkins: I want to move on to discuss special schools. Are you confident that there are no concerns regarding standards in those schools? I noticed that the sample of what you are doing is quite small. So, does

wneud yn eithaf bach. Felly, a yw hynny'n rhoi digon o batrwm cenedlaethol i chi er mwyn gwneud asesiadau cynhwysfawr?

[53] **Ms Keane:** Yn yr ysgolion arbennig a gynhelir, mae safonau yn uchel. Roedd hynny'n wir y llynedd, ac mae'n wir eto eleni. Felly, nid ydym yn poeni'n ormodol. Mae categori arall o ysgolion arbennig annibynnol nad ydynt yn cael eu cynnal drwy'r awdurdodau lleol, ond cânt eu cynnal drwy grantiau gan awdurdodau sy'n gosod plant ynddynt, ond ysgolion annibynnol ydynt. Rydym yn poeni mwy am y rheini. Mae'r safonau yn y rhai hynny yn fwy cymysg na'r rhai sydd yn yr ysgolion a gynhelir gan awdurdodau. Fodd bynnag, rydym hefyd yn monitro'r rheini yn flynyddol oherwydd y risgiau i'r disgyblion yn yr ysgolion hynny. Ambell waith, maent yn ddisgyblion sy'n cael eu gosod yn yr ysgolion sy'n dod o Loegr ac ati ac yn dod o bell o adref, felly rydym yn cynnal ymweliadau monitro blynyddol yn y rheini, yn ogystal â gwneud arolygiadau ffurfiol bob chwe blynedd.

[54] **Mr Rowlands:** O fewn y sector arbennig, mae ychydig o wahaniaeth rhwng yr ysgolion i blant sydd ag anghenion addysgol neu gorfforol. Mae'r rheini, ar y cyfan, yn cael canlyniadau da iawn mewn arolygiadau, ond mae'r ysgolion i blant sydd ag anghenion ymddygiad yn tueddu i gael canlyniadau mwy cymysg mewn arolygiadau. Felly, mae tipyn bach o wahaniaeth yno. Mae hynny'n debyg hefyd i'r unedau cyfeirio disgyblion yr ydym yn eu harolygu a nifer o'r ysgolion arbennig annibynnol yr oedd Ann yn cyfeirio atynt. Mae tipyn bach o anwastadrwydd o fewn y sector.

[55] **Ms Keane:** Mae mwy o amrywiaeth o ran safonau yn yr unedau cyfeirio disgyblion. Mae ystod eang o safonau yno.

[56] **Christine Chapman:** That is something that we want to discuss when we look at attendance and behaviour.

[57] **Bethan Jenkins:** Mae fy ail gwestiwn yn ymwneud â lleoliadau ar gyfer plant o dan bump oed. I ba raddau y mae'r cynnydd yng nghyfran y lleoliadau ar gyfer plant o dan bump oed y mae angen iddynt gael eu monitro gan awdurdod lleol ac Estyn

that provide enough of a national pattern for you to complete comprehensive assessments?

Ms Keane: In the maintained special schools, standards are high. That was true of last year, and it is true again this year. So, we are not overly concerned. There is another category of independent special schools that are not maintained through local authorities, but are maintained through grants from authorities that place children in them, but they are independent schools. We are more concerned about those. The standards in those schools are more mixed than the standards in the schools that are maintained by the authorities. However, we monitor those annually because of the risks to the pupils in those schools. On occasion, they are pupils who are placed in those schools coming from England and travelling a long way from their homes, so we carry out annual monitoring visits in those schools, as well as carrying out formal inspections every six years.

Mr Rowlands: Within the special sector, there is a slight difference between schools for children with educational or physical needs. Those, on the whole, have very good results in inspections, but schools for children with behavioural needs tend to have more mixed results in inspections. So, there is a slight difference there. That is similar as well to the pupil referral units that we inspect and a number of the independent special schools that Ann referred to. There is some inconsistency within the sector.

Ms Keane: There is more variation in standards in the pupil referral units. There is a wide range of standards there.

Bethan Jenkins: My second question is regarding settings for children aged under five. To what extent does the rise in the proportion of settings for children aged under 5 that need local authority and Estyn monitoring indicate a deterioration in

yn arwydd o ostyngiad mewn safonau yn y sector?

standards within the sector?

[58] **Ms Keane:** A oeddech yn gofyn am yr angen i'w monitro?

Ms Keane: Were you asking about the need to monitor them?

[59] **Bethan Jenkins:** Oeddwn, yr angen i'w monitro ymhellach.

Bethan Jenkins: Yes, the need for further monitoring.

[60] **Ms Keane:** Nid oes llawer o ragoriaeth yma ychwaith ar gyfer plant tair i bump oed. Fodd bynnag, mae 86% o'r rhai y gwnaethom eu harolygu y llynedd yn dda. Felly, er bod rhai gwendidau ynddynt, er enghraifft mae'r cynnydd mewn Cymraeg mewn lleiafrif o leoliadau yn wael, mae cynnydd o ran rhifedd a llythrennedd cynnar yn dderbyniol, ond maent yn wan o ran strwythur gwella ansawdd. Maent yn aml yn llefydd bychan iawn gyda nifer fach o staff. Mae manteision i hynny yn yr ystyr eu bod yn deuluol iawn a bod gofal da yn y sefyllfa honno, ond nid ydynt mor gryf o ran cynllunio a chynnal strwythur i fonitro cynnydd, gwelliant a hunan-arfarnu. Mae un mewn pump â diffygion mewn addysgu.

Ms Keane: There is not a great deal of excellence identified here in the three to five age group. However, 86% of those reviewed last year were good. So, although there are some weaknesses, for example the progress in the Welsh language in a minority of settings is poor, progress with regard to early numeracy and literacy is adequate, but they are weak with regard to quality improvement structures. Very often they are very small settings with a small number of staff. There are benefits to that in the sense that they are family orientated and that good care is in place, but they are not as strong with regard to planning and maintaining a structure to monitor progress, improvement and self-evaluation. One in five has deficiencies with regard to teaching.

[61] **Aled Roberts:** Hoffwn droi at yr ymweliadau dilynol. Mae'r adroddiad blynyddol yn nodi bod angen ymweliad dilynol ar 48% o ysgolion cynradd a 54% o ysgolion uwchradd. A ydych yn poeni bod y ffigur hwn mor uchel?

Aled Roberts: I would like to turn to the follow-up visits. The annual report notes that 48% of primary schools and 54% of secondary schools need follow-up visits. Are you concerned that this figure is so high?

9.45 a.m.

[62] **Ms Keane:** Mae'n uwch na'r hyn yr oeddwn wedi'i ddisgwyl pan yr oeddwn yn cynllunio'r fframwaith. Roeddwn yn meddwl y byddai tua thraean o ysgolion yn syrthio i mewn i'r categori hwn. Mae'r rheini'n cynnwys ysgolion sydd efallai yn dda ar y cyfan, hynny yw, mae mwyafrif o'u darpariaeth yn dda, ond mae rhai agweddau o'u gwaith sydd ddim yn ddigon da. Felly, rhyw fath o fecanwaith yw e i'n galluogi i fynd yn ôl i sicrhau bod ein hargymhellion yn cael eu gweithredu. Mewn ffordd, rydym wedi penderfynu rhoi llai o adnoddau i mewn i'r arolygiadau craidd, er mwyn medru ffocysu mwy o adnoddau ar sicrhau bod pethau'n digwydd o ganlyniad i'n hargymhellion. Yn y cylch diwethaf, yr hyn a oedd yn ein poeni oedd nid yn unig bod

Ms Keane: It is higher than I had expected when I was planning the framework. I had assumed that some third of schools would fall into this category. That includes schools that are perhaps good overall, that is, most of their provision is good, but some aspects of their work are not good enough. So, it is some sort of mechanism to enable us to return, to ensure that our recommendations are being implemented. In a way, we have decided to put fewer resources into core inspections so that we can focus greater resources on ensuring that there are outcomes to our findings. In the previous cycle, what concerned us was that not only were external inspectors often carrying out the work for us, but they would walk away at the end of the inspection and there would be no follow-up

arolygwyr allanol yn aml yn gwneud y gwaith drosom ni, ond eu bod yn cerdded i ffordd ar ddiwedd yr arolygiad a doedd dim byd yn digwydd wedyn am chwe blynedd. Dyna'r rheswm y gwnaethom feddwl am ffordd o wella'r system. Mae angen inni wneud yn siŵr nad yw'n cael ei adael i awdurdodau lleol, ond bod Estyn yn mynd yn ôl i wneud yn siŵr bod ein hargymhellion yn cael eu gweithredu gan yr ysgolion. Felly, efallai ein bod wedi ymestyn hwn bach yn rhy bell, wrth drïo dal pob ysgol yn hyn o beth.

[63] Rwy'n credu bod y nodwedd hon o'r drefn arolygu newydd wedi bod yn llwyddiant mawr. Rydym wedi cael ein synnu o'r ochr orau wrth fynd yn ôl. Roeddem wedi meddwl efallai byddai rhai yn llithro i lawr ac y byddem yn gorfod eu rhoi i mewn i gategoriâu, ond rydym wedi ffeindio eu bod wedi bwrw ati ac ymdrechu a symud ar yr argymhellion. Mae gennym y dystiolaeth bod hynny'n digwydd. Felly, rwy'n credu bod hynny'n rhoi sicrwydd i'r cyhoedd, i rieni, i'r Llywodraeth ac i chithau yn y pwyllgor bod ysgolion yn ymateb yn gadarnhaol i arolygiadau Estyn.

[64] **Aled Roberts:** A yw'r tîm cyflawn yn mynd yn ôl ar ymweliad dilynol? Faint o amser y maen nhw'n treulio yn yr ysgol i weld a yw'r dystiolaeth y mae'r pennaeth yn ei rhoi ger eu bron ynglŷn â gwella yn cael ei hadlewyrchu o ran ymarfer da yn y dosbarth?

[65] **Ms Keane:** Mae'r amser yn amrywio yn ôl maint yr ysgol. Ni allwn drefnu bod yr un tîmau'n mynd yn ôl i ysgolion; byddai *logistics* hynny'n ormodol. Rydym yn ceisio trefnu bod un aelod o'r tîm gwreiddiol yn mynd yn ôl, ond nid yw wastad yn bosibl i gael yr un tîm, o achos gofynion y rhaglen waith. Fodd bynnag, rwy'n hyderus ein bod yn mynd y tu hwnt i'r hyn y mae'r pennaeth yn ei ddweud yn ei ystafell wrth yr arolygwyr. Mae'r arolygwyr yn mynd trwy'r ysgol yn siarad â'r plant ac yn edrych ar y gwaith. Maen nhw hefyd yn edrych ar ddeilliannau o ran yr hyn sydd wedi cael ei wneud.

[66] **Aled Roberts:** A yw'n wendid o fewn y gyfundrefn os nad yw'r un tîm yn mynd yn ôl i'r ysgol? Rydym i gyd yn

for six years. That is why we thought about a way of improving the system. We need to ensure that it is not left to the local authorities, but that Estyn goes back to ensure that its recommendations are being implemented by schools. Therefore, perhaps we have taken this a little too far, in trying to catch all schools within this methodology.

I think that this characteristic of the new inspection system has been a great success. We have been pleasantly surprised when returning to the schools. We thought that perhaps some would slide backwards and we would have to place them in certain categories, but we have found that they have strived and endeavoured to improve and to progress the recommendations. We have evidence that that is happening. So, I think that that gives assurance to the public, parents, the Government and to you in this committee, that schools are responding positively to Estyn inspections.

Aled Roberts: Does the whole team go back on the follow-up visit? How much time do they spend in the school to see whether the evidence that the headteacher presents to them, to demonstrate improvement, is being reflected in good practice in the classroom?

Ms Keane: The time taken varies according to the size of the school. We cannot arrange for the same teams to go back to schools; the logistics of that would be too difficult. We try to arrange for one member of the original team to go back, but it is not always possible to have the same team, because of the demands of the work programme. However, I am confident that we go beyond what the headteacher tells inspectors behind closed doors. The inspectors go through the school, talk to children and look at the work. They also look at outcomes in terms of what has been achieved.

Aled Roberts: Is it a weakness in the system if it is not the same team that is going back to the school? We are all aware that, in all areas

ymwybodol, o fewn pob maes llafur, bod rhai pobl sy'n eithaf cadarn eu daliadau a rhai eraill sydd yn dipyn mwy o *soft touch*.

[67] **Ms Keane:** Nid wyf yn credu ei fod yn wendid mawr. Os oes gennym ffydd bod ein harolygwyr yn safonol ac yn defnyddio'r un safonau proffesiynol, ni ddylem boeni gormod pan fydd timau gwahanol yn mynd yn ôl i ysgolion. Dylent fod yn gweithio i'r un safonau. Mae'n rhaid i chi gofio, pan maen nhw'n mynd mewn yn gyntaf ar gyfer yr arolygiad craidd, maen nhw'n cynhyrchu rhywbeth rydym yn ei alw'n 'JEF', sef ffurflen arfarniadau, ac maen nhw'n rhannu hon ar rwydwaith gyfrifiadurol fewnol. Mae'r holl dystiolaeth yn mynd ar y ffurflen hon ac y mae ar gael yn yr hyn rydym ni'n ei alw'n '*virtual inspection room*', ar gyfer y monitro. Felly, mae'r arolygwyr yn gallu mynd yn ôl ac edrych ar fanylder y dystiolaeth a gasglwyd yn yr arolygiad diwethaf; nid ydynt yn cychwyn o'r newydd.

[68] **Mr Rowlands:** Mae'r system rheoli ansawdd sydd gyda ni yn bwysig iawn yn y cyd-destun hwn. Mae pob arolygiad yn cael ei fonitro gan Estyn yn fewnol. Dyna'r hyn rydym yn ei olygu wrth i ni ddweud ein bod wedi cymryd yr arolygiadau mewn i Estyn; nid ydym yn eu contractio allan nawr i dimau annibynnol. Felly, mae'r holl dystiolaeth honno'n cael sialens gan dîm rheoli ansawdd Estyn. Rydym yn hyderus iawn bod llawer o gysondeb yng ngwaith y timau ar yr arolygiadau craidd gwreiddiol ac yn y gwaith monitro sy'n digwydd wedyn. Mae'n bwysig dweud, yn yr ymweliadau monitro, rydym yn edrych yn benodol ar yr *recommendations* sydd wedi cael eu gwneud yn yr arolygiadau gwreiddiol. Rydym ni jyst yn edrych ar y rheini. Felly, os nad oes llawer o'r rheini, nid oes angen treulio cymaint o amser yn yr ysgol. Nid yw'r ymweliadau monitro, felly, yn arolygiadau llawn. Nid ydynt yn edrych ar bob dim. Maen nhw jyst yn edrych ar y pethau rydym ni'n teimlo sydd angen eu gwella.

[69] **Ms Keane:** Maent yn ffocysu ar y gwendidau a'r diffygion rydym wedi eu gweld. A dod yn ôl at y broses sicrhau ansawdd, gyda phob arolygiad Estyn, mae'r ffurflen arfarniadau yn dod yn ôl mewn ac mae timau o bobl sydd wedi cael eu hyfforddi

of work, there are some people who have strong convictions and others who are more of a soft touch.

Ms Keane: I do not think that it is a particular deficiency. If we are confident that our inspectors are of a similar quality and use the same professional standards, we should not be overly concerned when different teams go back to the schools. They should be working to the same standards. You must bear in mind that when they first enter for the core inspection, they produce what we call a 'JEF', which is an evaluation form, and they share that on an internal computer network. All the evidence goes onto this form and it is available in what we call the 'virtual inspection room', for monitoring. Therefore, inspectors can go back and look in detail at the evidence gathered in the previous inspection; they do not start anew.

Mr Rowlands: Our quality control system is very important in this context. Every inspection is monitored internally by Estyn. That is what we mean when we say that we have taken the inspections into Estyn; we are not contracting them out now to independent teams. So, all of that evidence is challenged by Estyn's quality control team. We are very confident that there is great consistency in the teams' work on the initial core inspections and the subsequent monitoring work. It is important to say, in the monitoring visits, we look specifically at the recommendations that were made in the initial inspections. We concentrate on those. So, if they are not many of those, we do not have to spend as much time in the school. The monitoring visits, therefore, are not full inspections. They do not look at all aspects. They look only at the aspects that we feel need to be improved.

Ms Keane: They focus on the weaknesses and deficiencies that we have identified. To return to the quality assurance process, with every inspection that Estyn carries out, the JEF forms are returned and teams of people who are trained to challenge that evidence

er mwyn herio'r dystiolaeth eto yn edrych arnynt. Hynny yw, mae hyn yn digwydd gyda'r arolygiad, ond maen nhw'n herio'r dystiolaeth, gan ofyn cwestiynau fel, 'Rydych wedi rhoi "digonol" fel arfarniad ar yr addysgu; gadewch i ni weld beth yw'r dystiolaeth fanwl. A oes ffit rhwng y dystiolaeth sydd yn yr arfarniadau a'r arfarniad hwnnw?' Mae honno'n cael ei rhedeg fel proses wrthrychol ar wahân ar ôl yr arolygiad, cyn ein bod yn danfon yr adroddiad at yr ysgol neu'r darparwr iddynt wneud *check* arno.

[70] **Aled Roberts:** A oes gwaith wedi cael ei wneud yn cymharu arolygiadau gyda'r system bandio? O ran rhieni, mae diffyg dealltwriaeth ynglŷn â sut mae ysgol sydd yn cael ei hasesu yn 'ardderchog' gan Estyn yn dod mewn i fand is a'r ffordd arall rownd. Mae esiamplau o ysgolion sydd â chanlyniadau eithaf sâl, yn nhyb rhai, ac asesiadau gan Estyn nad ydynt yn dderbyniol iawn, ac eto maent o fewn y bandiau uchaf. A ydych wedi gwneud unrhyw waith cymharu?

[71] **Ms Keane:** Ydym, rydym wedi edrych a gweld, fel rydych wedi ei ddweud, fod rhai nad ydynt yn cyfateb yn gywir. Wrth gwrs, maen nhw'n systemau gwahanol. Mae'r bandio yn seiliedig ar set o ddata arbennig sy'n cael eu cyfuno yn ôl fformiwla sy'n cynhyrchu canlyniad. Rydym ni'n cychwyn gydag ystod o setiau data manwl iawn ar draws Cymru, sy'n cynnwys y bandio ond yn mynd dipyn ymhellach o ran manylder, ac rydym yn gosod setiau eraill o dystiolaeth at hynny. Hynny yw, gan ddod yn ôl at yr hyn roeddwn yn sôn amdano yn gynharach, rydym yn edrych ar gyflawniad yn ogystal â chyrhaeddiad. Mae'r data yn dweud rhai pethau wrthym ac maent yn codi rhai cwestiynau, ond ein gwaith yw mynd i mewn i'r dosbarth, edrych ar waith y plant, dod i ddeall lle maen nhw arni yn ôl y lefelau galluoedd gwahanol a'r grwpiau gwahanol, fel plant sydd dan ofal neu'r plant sy'n cael prydau ysgol am ddim, ac rydym yn hel ystod eang o ddata ar gyrhaeddiad plant yn yr ysgol. Felly, mae ein harfarniadau yn seiliedig ar dystiolaeth ehangach.

[72] **Aled Roberts:** A gawn ni symud ymlaen at awdurdodau lleol?

then look at them. That is to say, this happens as part of the inspection, but they challenge the evidence, asking questions like, 'You have evaluated the teaching as "adequate"; let us dig down to see what the evidence is. Is there a fit between the evidence contained within the evaluation and that evaluation?' That is run as a separate, objective process following the inspection, before we send the report to the school or the provider so that they can carry out a check on it.

Aled Roberts: Has any work been done to compare inspections with the banding system? Among parents, there is a lack of understanding about how a school that is assessed as being excellent by Estyn is in a lower band and the other way around as well. There are examples of schools that, according to some, have fairly poor results and Estyn assessments that are not very satisfactory, and yet they are in the highest bands. Have you done any comparative work?

Ms Keane: Yes, we have done some work and seen, as you said, that there is not always that correlation. Of course, they are different systems. The banding is based on a particular dataset that is put together according to a formula that produces an outcome. We start with a range of very detailed datasets across Wales that include the banding, but go a fair bit further in terms of detail, and we add other datasets to that. That is, coming back to what I was talking about earlier, we look at attainment as well as achievement. The data tell us certain things, and they raise some questions, but our work is to go into those classrooms, to look at the work of the pupils, to learn where they are according to the different ability levels and the different groupings, such as children who are in care or receiving free school meals, and then we bring together a broad range of data on pupil attainment in the school. Therefore, our evaluations are based on broader evidence sets.

Aled Roberts: Can we move on to local authorities?

[73] **Christine Chapman:** We have just over half an hour left and we have some pretty major themes to explore, so can we try to keep up the pace? Please ask your question.

[74] **Aled Roberts:** Cawsom adroddiadau ddoe ynglŷn â sir Fynwy a Merthyr a oedd braidd yn siomedig. A yw canlyniadau'r arolygiadau o fewn gwasanaethau addysg llywodraeth leol yn adlewyrchu dirywiad mewn safonau?

Aled Roberts: We had reports yesterday relating to Monmouthshire and Merthyr that were slightly disappointing. Do the results of inspections of local government educational services reflect a deterioration in standards?

[75] **Ms Keane:** Mae hwnnw'n gwestiwn dyrys. Pe bawn i'n edrych dros y 10 blynedd diwethaf, buaswn i'n dweud bod dirywiad wedi bod yn ansawdd rhai o'r gwasanaethau addysg mae rhai o'r awdurdodau bychain, yn arbennig, yn gallu eu cynnig a'u cynnal. Wrth fonitro yn rhai o'r awdurdodau sydd eisoes mewn mesurau arbennig, rydym yn gweld bod nifer y swyddogion yn fychan, eu bod yn gorfod gweithio ar draws ystod eang o swyddogaethau ac nad oes *economies of scale* gyda nhw yn y ffordd y byddai ganddynt petaent yn fwy o faint, yn gallu targedu'n well ac yn gallu tynnu ar ddyfnder staffio. Does dim dyfnder staffio yn yr awdurdodau bychain. Y cyfan sydd angen i chi ei wneud yw edrych ar nifer y swyddogion sy'n gweithio yn yr awdurdodau bychain, a byddwch yn gweld cyn lleied ydyn nhw.

Ms Keane: That is a complex question. If I were to take an overview of the past 10 years, I would say that there has been a decline in the quality of some of the education services that some of the smaller authorities, in particular, can provide and maintain. When we monitor in some of the authorities that have already been put into special measures, we see that the number of officials is small, they have to work across a wide range of functions and they do not have the economies of scale that they would have if they were larger, could target more effectively and draw on a bigger pool of staffing. We do not have that pool of people in the smaller authorities. All you have to do is look at the number of officials working in those small authorities and you will see how few there are.

[76] **Aled Roberts:** Ond, hyd yn oed o fewn awdurdodau mwy, a oes problem denu staff gyda'r arbenigedd perthnasol, oherwydd bod cyflogau penaethiaid a dirprwy bennaethiaid ysgolion yn llawer gwell na chyflogau yn y gyfundrefn llywodraeth leol?

Aled Roberts: However, even within larger authorities, is there a problem attracting staff with the relevant expertise, because the salaries for heads and deputy heads of schools are far better than the salaries in the local government structure?

[77] **Ms Keane:** Mae hynny'n bwynt teg i'w wneud ac mae'n bwynt i'w drafod. Mae'n wir fod cyflogau penaethiaid ysgolion yn arbennig wedi codi dipyn yn uwch na chyflogau'r swyddi hynny. Ond, nid ydym wedi gwneud unrhyw ddadansoddiad i gynnig tystiolaeth arbennig i chi ynglŷn â hynny.

Ms Keane: That is a fair point and it may be a point for discussion. It is true that the wages of headteachers in schools have increased so that they are much higher than those of the other posts that you mentioned. However, we have not carried out any analysis to provide you with particular evidence on that issue.

[78] **Jenny Rathbone:** You say that only a few local authorities have worked with schools to promote good practice in developing literacy and numeracy skills. I wonder what else they are doing, therefore, because that seems to be absolutely core. How will the national literacy and numeracy framework address that and ensure that all local authorities are doing what they are employed to do?

[79] **Ms Keane:** I could speak very positively about those authorities that have worked hard on literacy and numeracy over the years. Newport, for instance, has a very good

reputation in that respect, which goes back many years. Newport's inspection outcomes reflect the enormous work that the authority puts in to promoting literacy and numeracy across the whole curriculum, by mobilising teachers of English and Maths to help and support other teachers in their schools. That has paid off for them in terms of examination outcomes, even though the socioeconomic context is challenging.

[80] The same is true of whole-school initiatives in places like Neath Port Talbot and Swansea. There have been marked improvements in schools where local authorities have put a sterling effort into promoting literacy and numeracy over a period of time. That is a strategy that pays off over time. It is not amenable to a quick fix. You mentioned the national literacy and numeracy framework; that will take time to bed in. What we are talking about here is, in effect, a recalibration of the curriculum—an injection to strengthen the basic skills that underlie all the subjects and the way in which they are taught in the curriculum. All children need skills in reading, understanding and comprehension, and the ability to use language, to marshal facts, to analyse and to communicate. Those are fundamental to all subjects in the curriculum.

[81] Our inspections, over the past few years, have told us that schools are not yet good enough at that. The literacy and numeracy framework gives an infrastructure to let schools know, 'These are the things that you must do; these are the things you must work towards'. In a way, it is an accountability framework. Teachers need support in classroom practice and in improving that classroom practice. There are various ways in which that can be provided. I know that work has been undertaken to point to best practice. The most important thing about that is that it needs to be systematic. Initiatives should be joined up. The national support programme should be joined up to the framework and the regional consortia. It is imperative that a national strategic approach is taken to literacy and numeracy in Wales.

10.00 a.m.

[82] **Jenny Rathbone:** All schools have in-service training; why are headteachers not using these moments to drive this through the curriculum approach to literacy and numeracy? You have already spoken about the poor performance of some local authorities and the good performance of others, but equally, for headteachers and other senior leaders, surely it is their job to see the offer across the patch, and it is disappointing that that has not been going on. How do you think this new national strategy will ensure that everybody is doing it?

[83] **Ms Keane:** Of course, the truth of it is that some schools are doing this. The schools that we say are excellent are doing this, and if you read their inspection reports, they describe in some detail how they are doing it.

[84] The schools that are adequate or unsatisfactory have not been doing this, or they have not been doing it for long enough. One hopes that these national initiatives will be taken up in the regional consortia, and that people will bring on board those heads that have been reluctant to join the literacy and numeracy projects. I know that a lot of authorities have had projects; I think the issue is one of how, strategically and as an imperative, we can get those heads on board that have not totally been on board.

[85] **Jenny Rathbone:** Okay, but their results should expose a failure to address this.

[86] **Ms Keane:** I think that they do. I think that their results expose them at all levels.

[87] **Mr Rowlands:** I think that it would be fair to say that nearly all schools would have run INSET days on literacy, but how successful that has been will vary a lot, depending on the leadership of the school and, to some extent, the authority. So, I think that things are moving and, certainly, as I said, nearly all schools will have run an INSET on literacy, but not

so much with numeracy. Later on, maybe when we talk about poverty, you will see that that does not feature in many schools' INSET programme.

[88] **Bethan Jenkins:** Rwyf ar ddeall bod hyfforddiant newydd i gyd-fynd â'r fframwaith newydd y mae Leighton Andrews wedi ei gyhoeddi ynghylch llythrennedd ac ati. A ydych yn rhoi mewnbwn yn y contractau i'r timau sy'n rhedeg yr hyfforddiant newydd hwn, neu a fyddwch yn monitro neu'n edrych ar y modd y mae'r hyfforddiant hwn yn cael ei roi i athrawon? Rwy'n credu ei bod yn bwysig, os oes newid pwyslais yn hyn o beth, fod darlun cenedlaethol, neu y bydd gormod o amrywio eto rhwng awdurdodau lleol. Rwy'n ymwybodol bod contractau newydd wedi digwydd; felly, a fyddwch yn edrych i mewn i hynny'n fanwl yn y dyfodol?

Bethan Jenkins: I am given to understand that there is new training to go with the new framework that Leighton Andrews has announced with regard to literacy and so on. Do you have any input into the contracts for the teams running the new training, or will you monitor or look at how this training is given to teachers? I think that it is important that if there is any change in emphasis in this regard, there is a national picture, or there will again be too much variation between the local authorities. I am aware that new contracts have been introduced; so, will you be looking into that in detail in the future?

[89] **Ms Kenya:** Rydym wedi cael cyfarfod gyda'r contractwr yn barod, ac rydym yn bwriadu gwneud y cwbl a allwn i sicrhau ein bod yn cefnogi ac yn bwydo i mewn pob dim y gallwn i gynorthwyo'r broses. Wrth gwrs, yn naturiol, byddwn, drwy'n harolygiadau i raddau, yn monitro effeithiau'r gwaith sy'n mynd rhagddo.

Ms Keane: We have had a meeting with the contractor already, and we intend to do all that we can to ensure that we support and feed in anything we can to assist the process. Of course, naturally, we shall, through our inspections to some extent, be monitoring the effects of the work that is ongoing.

[90] **Aled Roberts:** Mae un math o brawf rhifedd a gafodd ei oedi tan y flwyddyn nesaf, onid oes? A ydych yn cyd-fynd â hynny? Yr esboniad sydd wedi'i roi yw bod angen i'r plant a'r athrawon feddu ar sgiliau gwahanol, sy'n cael eu hadlewyrchu yn y prawf hwnnw. Mae swnio fel petai elfen o gymryd mantais yn hynny o beth.

Aled Roberts: There is one type of numeracy test that has been delayed until next year, is there not? Do you agree with that? The explanation that was made available is that there is a need for children and teachers to have these other skills, which are reflected in that test. That makes it sound as though advantage is being taken in that regard.

[91] **Ms Keane:** Mae'n harolygwyr arbenigol wedi bod yn cydweithio gyda'r adran ar y manylion. Nid wyf i wedi bod yn ymwneud â'r manylion hynny, ond mae AEM, mewn mathemateg ac iaith, wedi bod yn gweithio gyda'r adran i roi tystiolaeth a fydd yn help o ran ein gwybodaeth am yr ysgolion o ran rhedeg y profion. Ni allaf sôn am y penderfyniad hwnnw.

Ms Keane: Our expert inspectors have been working with the department on the details. I have not had anything to do with those details, but HMI, in mathematics and language, has been working with the department to provide evidence that will be of assistance with regard to our understanding of schools and how that could assist in the running of the tests. I cannot talk about that particular decision.

[92] **Aled Roberts:** Oni fyddai'n well i ni weld yn union beth yw realiti'r sefyllfa eleni yn yr ysgolion ynglŷn â'r ddau fath o ymateb i fathemateg?

Aled Roberts: Would it not be better to see what the reality of the situation is this year in the schools regarding the two kinds of response to mathematics?

[93] **Ms Keane:** Rydym yn gwybod nad yw'r sefyllfa o ran mathemateg yn gryf gan mai mathemateg yw'r pwnc gwannaf o ran canlyniadau TGAU. Felly, nid wyf yn credu bod hyder. Mae tipyn o wybodaeth gennym am fathemateg yn barod sy'n dangos bod rhai gwendidau.

Ms Keane: We know that the situation in terms of mathematics is not strong, given that mathematics is the weakest subject in terms of the GCSE results. Therefore, I do not believe that there is any great confidence. We have a great deal of information already that shows that there are certain weaknesses.

[94] **Rebecca Evans:** I would like to move on to poverty and attainment. Earlier this week, I sponsored an event for Save the Children where young people spoke quite passionately about the effect that poverty had on learning for them. It reflects what you have said in your report: that there is that strong link between poverty and low attainment. However, you also say that the link is not inevitable, and you highlight a few examples where schools have high levels of achievement despite pupils' socioeconomic status. How rare are those cases?

[95] **Ms Keane:** Three of the five secondary schools that we awarded 'excellent' to last year had free school meal figures of over a quarter. We have quoted a lot of the case studies from our poverty remit in the annual report in detail, and some of them were featured on the television. I am very glad to say that schools like Cefn Hengoed, Cwrt Sart, Bryn Elian and many others are succeeding despite the odds. In our remit report on poverty—and to some extent in the section on poverty in the annual report—we have identified the detailed things that these schools do that enable them to succeed. They do all the little things. Children have to be in school in order to make progress, so they deal with issues to do with attendance. I know we are moving into the attendance and behaviour area now, but that is all one, in a way. They have whole-school policies that teachers implement thoroughly, and they have mechanisms for following up absence very quickly. They have a good relationship with parents, and they contact parents immediately. They report on attendance as well as on academic performance, and they have fora on multi-agency representation that deal with particular issues to do with particular families. They undertake interventions, they offer out-of-school-hours support and they offer mentoring to pupils. In other words, they have a multilayered strategy that addresses the impact of poverty on our young people.

[96] They build up a set of mechanisms on different levels to deal, initially, with the problem of non-attendance and so on, and then they ask the larger questions. They ask what it is about the curriculum that is not engaging the pupils. It is a matter for the schools to do that, and I am thinking of Cefn Hengoed Community School in particular here, which asked what it could do with the key stage 4 curriculum to offer more vocational courses to engage pupils better. It asked why it was that some people were truanting in key stage 3, and it asked whether they were falling behind on skills because of that missing out on school, because of that absence. It asked what it could do to shore up their skills—the literacy and numeracy, in other words—in key stage 3 so that, when it got them to attend school, they had not fallen so far behind that they had lost all self-confidence.

[97] It is then also a matter of out-of-school-hours learning that is not just extra bits of this or that, or some sports or creative experiences after school, but is actually something that is tailored and complements the curriculum. To do this, you have to have whole-school commitment, and Cefn Hengoed is a very good example of that, with a head who is totally committed. She was telling me that she came from a background of dealing with attendance and working her way up through middle management. It comes from putting together this multilayered strategy, training up your teachers, getting everybody on board and not being afraid to ask the bigger questions about why it is that schools are not engaging the pupils, and not engaging the parents—it is absolutely essential to get the parents on board.

[98] **Christine Chapman:** Before we move on, Ann, do you have any inspectors within

Estyn who specialise in poverty and attainment?

[99] **Ms Keane:** Yes, we do. We have had a series of lead inspectors who have worked on the Raising Attainment and Individual Standards in Education programme in the past, but we now have an inspector who leads on poverty. We have published reports on RAISE for a number of years, so we have built up quite a few reports on this. The most recent report on poverty, of which I am proud, has been extremely helpful—as intended—by telling schools, ‘Look, this is what the successful schools are doing’. It goes into those case studies in some detail.

[100] **Christine Chapman:** Okay. Thank you. Did you want to come in, Jenny?

[101] **Jenny Rathbone:** I just want to come back on literacy and numeracy, particularly in relation to the foundation phase. We are all very proud of the foundation phase and our learning through play, but how might the proposal to have annual tests for literacy and numeracy in year 2, when pupils are six or seven years old, impact on the learning through play initiative and the inclination that some people might have to teach the test?

[102] **Ms Keane:** When people think about tests, they often think of pupils sitting in rows of desks in gymnasias in a very formal atmosphere. The reality for younger children is that it does not have to be like that at all. It is just another exercise in the classroom. I do not subscribe necessarily to the notion that tests are things that you cannot use with young children because they are very scary things. They are just another way of diagnosing helpfully how that child needs to progress, where the weaknesses are, and so on. You can do that in a non-threatening way. Having tests does not necessarily mean that you drive a culture where pupils endlessly practise tests. There is no doubt, however, that if you have tests, teachers will feel the need to prepare pupils. In many respects, that is fine, because pupils need to feel confident that this is a process that is pretty routine, run-of-the-mill and non-threatening. I would think that the professionalism of most teachers would enable them to deal with that issue; that is, to run the tests and not change the essential philosophy of the foundation phase.

[103] **Jenny Rathbone:** Is this something that you will be looking at quite closely?

[104] **Ms Keane:** Yes. We will be monitoring that very closely on our inspections.

[105] **Christine Chapman:** Rebecca wants to come in on this.

[106] **Rebecca Evans:** Mr Rowlands, you mentioned INSET days and that very few schools use those days to address poverty and attainment. Do you have any examples where schools have done it well that we could look at?

[107] **Mr Rowlands:** I am flashing this report, ‘Effective practice in tackling poverty and disadvantage in schools’, all of the time, but we are quite proud of the report because, as the chief inspector said, we have done reports on poverty for many years. I think that we have had a report about poverty and disadvantage in one shape or form for every year for the last seven or eight years, initially about the RAISE initiative. They were excellent reports, but some of them may be a little technical. They were designed to analyse the situation and give the Assembly advice. However, this year, in this report, we deliberately designed it with no recommendations. It has just 10 practical steps that schools can take to address the impact of poverty on achievement. There are 10 case studies. So, those schools, both primary and secondary, are undertaking good practice, which includes in-service training. The tenth step is the training of teachers. As Ann said, one of the most important things to bear in mind is that there is no magic bullet for addressing the impact of poverty. That means that a school must have what we sometimes call a multilayered approach, a whole-school approach, which means that there are many different things that need to be done. The role of the head and the

senior management team is, therefore, to co-ordinate those things—to keep all of those plates spinning, if you like—and ensure that they are coherent.

10.15 a.m.

[108] **Ms Keane:** It is also about using performance management to set targets for staff. Secondary schools in particular have performance indicators. A lot of them are about moving pupils across the D to C border, as it were. For children who are disadvantaged, however, this has to mean making progress anywhere—they need to make progress from wherever they are. So, you need performance management targets that link to improvement for all of those pupils, not just for moving people across the D to C border. In the annual report, we list the case study links—Cwrt Sart Community Comprehensive, Llwynypia Primary School, Sandfields Comprehensive School, Ysgol Melyd, Ysgol Bryn Elian, Cefn Hengoed Community School, Ysgol y Castell, St Woolos Primary School, Cathays High School and Mount Stuart Primary School; each one is described in detail. The great advantage there is that those schools are quite happy to talk to other schools about what they have done and how they have succeeded. As I have said, some of those schools are the ones that get ‘excellent’ in our inspections.

[109] **Mr Brown:** There is also a role for local authorities. We have some case studies of the E3+ project in Rhondda Cynon Taf and the ENGAGE project in south-west Wales that address the things that Ann was talking about, namely that these youngsters in the more deprived communities need their self-esteem and confidence to be built up with out-of-school activities that get them back into the swim of the mainstream curriculum. Those particular projects work in close partnership with schools. It is not just about multilayered schemes, because sometimes schools just cannot do this work by themselves. Schools also need the support of other schools and local authority projects such as these.

[110] **Christine Chapman:** Suzy, did you want to come in here?

[111] **Suzy Davies:** Yes. On performance indicators and national benchmarking, do you think that we need to consider something similar for disadvantaged children, so that we can measure properly how they are improving?

[112] **Ms Keane:** We have benchmarks for free school meals, which we use. We compare, for instance, the attainment rates of pupils receiving free school meals with those of other pupils. We look at those rates very carefully—the last but one raising attainment and individual standards in education in Wales report looked very carefully at the impact of the percentage of FSM pupils in a school on the overall attainment of the school. There are data that enables us to that. There are also data on other groups that we can use. We look at the overall data for a school, but, under section 1.1 of our common inspection framework, we also ask, ‘How are the looked-after children doing? How are the minority ethnic group children doing? How are the FSM and Gypsy/Traveller children doing?’ One of the things that we do now, which we did not do in the last cycle of inspections, is look at how the school is helping to add value to the progress that different groups of pupils are making, not just look at the big picture.

[113] **Suzy Davies:** Looking at different sorts of deprivation, in a way.

[114] **Ms Keane:** Yes.

[115] **Suzy Davies:** Are those measuring tools sufficiently robust to see whether the pupil deprivation grant is working? I can see that you raise some concerns in your report that that ring-fenced money, the effectiveness of which should be easy to follow, is, perhaps, not going to the destinations to which it should be going.

[116] **Ms Keane:** There has been a tendency, with RAISE money and the pupil deprivation grant, to focus on the low achievers as opposed to those who are FSM pupils, among whom there are, of course, high achievers or potential high achievers. Our criticism has always been that schools will tend to put this money into supporting low achievers en masse, as it were.

[117] **Suzy Davies:** The low achievers from wealthier backgrounds, shall we say?

[118] **Ms Keane:** They are possibly from wealthier backgrounds as well. However, schools are certainly not identifying and targeting FSM pupils specifically across the whole ability range, and saying, 'It is not just about supporting, doing catch-up work or intervening with the low achievers; it is about helping the FSM pupils move further up'.

[119] **Suzy Davies:** That is not happening at the moment, do you not think?

[120] **Ms Keane:** It has not been happening in the past.

[121] **Christine Chapman:** We have a maximum of 10 minutes left, and I want to move on to issues around post-16 education, so I will move on to questions from Simon.

[122] **Simon Thomas:** Mae rhan o'r adroddiad yn cyfateb i'm profiad personol i, sy'n anecdotaidd felly, ond mae'n braf cael tystiolaeth ohono yn eich adroddiad. Rydych yn dweud bod rhai disgyblion ôl-16 yn cael eu cadw mewn amgylchiadau nad ydynt er eu lles nhw ond sydd er lles cyllidol y sefydliad y maent yn astudio ynddo. A yw hynny'n digwydd mwy mewn ysgolion na cholegau?

Simon Thomas: Part of the report corresponds to my personal experience, which is anecdotal, therefore, but it is good to have evidence of it in your report. You say that some post-16 pupils are kept in circumstances that are not of benefit to them but are of financial benefit to the institution in which they are studying. Does that happen more in schools than colleges?

[123] **Ms Keane:** Mae'n digwydd mewn ysgolion a cholegau. Mewn ysgolion yr hyn sy'n digwydd yn aml yw hyn: yn hytrach na rhoi cefnogaeth i ddisgyblion symud ymlaen i gyrsiau galwedigaethol llawn amser, er enghraifft, cwrs BTEC mewn gofal, peirianeg neu beth bynnag, mae ysgolion ambell waith yn dweud, 'Gallwch astudio dau gwrs lefel A a'r fagloriaeth. Arhoswch yn yr ysgol.' Wedyn, mae rhai o'r disgyblion hynny yn cael trafferthion, efallai, ac, ar ddiwedd blwyddyn gyntaf y chweched, maent yn gadael. Mae nifer, felly, bob blwyddyn yn gadael yr ysgol yn 17 oed a mynd i goleg i ddechrau cwrs BTEC, cwrs, efallai y byddai wedi bod yn well iddynt ei gychwyn yn 16 oed. Mae'r un peth yn digwydd, i raddau, mewn colegau pan fod pobl a fyddai'n gallu mynd ar gyrsiau lefel 2 yn cael eu rhoi ar gyrsiau lefel 1. Wrth gwrs, mae hynny, yn y gorffennol, wedi galluogi'r coleg i dynnu mwy o gyllid lawr am amser ychwanegol, oherwydd, wedi gorffen cwrs lefel 1 maent yn mynd ymlaen i gwrs lefel 2, ond, mewn gwirionedd, maent yn abl i fynd

Ms Keane: It happens in schools and colleges. What often happens in schools is this: rather than supporting pupils to move on to full-time vocational courses, for example, a BTEC course in care, engineering or whatever, schools occasionally will say, 'You can study two A-level courses and the baccalaureate. Stay in school.' Then, some of those pupils will have difficulties, perhaps, and, at the end of their first year in the sixth form, they leave. A number of pupils every year, therefore, will leave school at 17 and go to college to start a BTEC course, a course that, perhaps, it would have been better for them to have started aged 16. The same thing happens to some extent in colleges, when people who could go on level 2 courses are placed on level 1 courses. Of course, in the past, that has enabled the college to draw more funding down for an additional period, because, having completed a level 1 course, they proceed to a level 2 course, but, in reality, they are capable of going immediately to a level 2 course.

yn syth i gwrs lefel 2.

- [124] **Simon Thomas:** Ai'r cymhelliad ariannol sy'n bennaf gyfrifol am hynny? **Simon Thomas:** Is the financial incentive mostly responsible for that?
- [125] **Ms Keane:** Buaswn yn tybio hynny. **Ms Keane:** I would presume so.
- [126] **Simon Thomas:** Rwyf jyst eisiau hynny ar y cofnod, fel petai. **Simon Thomas:** I just want that on the record, as it were.
- [127] **Ms Keane:** Yn rhannol, o leiaf. Yr hyn sydd yn ein poeni yw nad yw hyn yn deg â galluoedd a photensial y myfyrwyr hynny. **Ms Keane:** Partly, at least. What concerns us is that this is not fair with regard to those students' abilities and potential.
- [128] **Simon Thomas:** Beth yw'r ateb, felly? Rydym, drwy'r Mesur Dysgu a Sgiliau (Cymru) 2009, wedi gosod y dewisiadau eang hyn ar gyfer disgyblion. Rydym hefyd wedi cael tystiolaeth o'r blaen yn y pwyllgor hwn mai dylanwad rhieni, athrawon, yr ysgol a chyfoedion yn drwm ar y disgyblion hyn. Beth yw'r ffordd ymlaen i sicrhau bod ystyriaeth lawnach yn cael ei rhoi i anghenion y disgybl, yn hytrach na rhai'r sefydliad? **Simon Thomas:** What is the answer, therefore? We have, through the Learning and Skills (Wales) Measure 2009, placed these broad options before pupils. We have also had evidence in this committee previously that these pupils are heavily influenced by parents, teachers, the school and their peer group. What is the way forward to ensure that fuller consideration is given to the pupil's needs, rather than those of the institution?
- [129] **Ms Keane:** Gwnaeth adroddiad Webb rai awgrymiadau bachog. Fodd bynnag, os yw'r gyfundrefn yn dal i ariannu sefydliadau unigol ar sail lwfansau'r pen, yna cewch gystadleuaeth am fyfyrwyr. **Ms Keane:** The Webb report made some eye-catching recommendations. However, if the system continues to fund individual institutions on a per capita basis, then you are going to have competition for pupils.
- [130] **Simon Thomas:** A fuasech yn disgrifio hynny fel *perverse incentive*? **Simon Thomas:** Would you describe that as a perverse incentive?
- [131] **Ms Keane:** Buaswn. Mae'n naturiol i unrhyw sefydliad. Maent yn credu yn yr hyn maent yn ei wneud ac mae angen denu cwsmeriaid arnynt oherwydd cânt ragor o arian a staff o ganlyniad. Mae rhywun yn gallu deall rhesymeg hynny'n llwyr o safbwynt sefydliad, ond nid yw wastad o help i bob disgybl unigol. **Ms Keane:** I would. It is natural for any institution. They believe in what they do and they need to attract customers because they will have more money and staff as a result. One can completely understand the logic of that from the institution's point of view, but it does not always assist the individual pupil.
- [132] **Aled Roberts:** O ran colegau, o leiaf mae angen iddynt gasglu gwybodaeth ynglŷn â faint o fyfyrwyr sy'n gadael ar ôl y flwyddyn gyntaf. Fel cyn-lywodraethwr coleg, rwy'n gwybod bod y wybodaeth honno yn cael ei thrafod gan y corff os oes problem, ond nid yw'r un wybodaeth ar gael o fewn y system ysgolion. **Aled Roberts:** In terms of colleges, at least they have to collect information on the number of students that drop out after the first year. As a former governor of a college, I know that that information is discussed within the body if there is a problem, but the same information is not available in the schools system.
- [133] **Ms Keane:** Rwyf wedi dweud yn glir yn yr adroddiad blynyddol ei bod yn hen bryd **Ms Keane:** I have stated clearly in the annual report that it is high time we had a system of

i ni gael system casglu data ar gymwysterau a chyfraddau cwblhau cyrsiau myfyrwyr rhwng 16 a 18 oed sydd yr un peth ar gyfer ysgolion, chweched dosbarth ac addysg bellach. Nid oes modd cymharu deilliannau ar hyn o bryd, ac mae hynny'n wir ar gyfer disgyblion, rhieni ac arolygwyr.

[134] **Simon Thomas:** Rwyf am symud ymlaen at ran o'r patrwm hwn, sef y fagloriaeth Gymreig, oherwydd mae eich adroddiad yn dweud bod gormod o amrywiaeth yn y ddarpariaeth ac nid yw wedi'i theilwra i'r unigolyn. Rydych yn casglu bod modd datblygu'r fagloriaeth ond bod angen seiliau mwy cadarn. Wrth gwrs, rydym wedi clywed yn ystod y flwyddyn ddiwethaf gasgliadau adroddiad Huw Evans ar hyn ac ar symud tuag at raddio'r fagloriaeth. Beth yw eich asesiad o botensial y newidiadau sydd wedi cael eu hargymell ar gyfer y fagloriaeth i wella'r ddarpariaeth fel ag y mae ar hyn o bryd?

[135] **Ms Keane:** Roeddwn yn aelod o'r bwrdd hwnnw, felly rwy'n ffyddiog ein bod yn mynd i'r cyfeiriad cywir yn hyn o beth. Mae potensial enfawr gan y fagloriaeth i roi ystod cwriciwlwm ehangach na'r cyfryw i ddisgyblion. Rwyf wedi bod mewn ysgolion lle mae darpariaeth arbennig ar gyfer Cymru, Ewrop a'r byd, ac mae disgyblion yn gallu gwneud gwaith astudiaeth unigol a chyrraedd safonau uchel yn hynny o beth. Yr her yw bod gormod o amrywiaeth yn y safonau. Mae newidiadau ar y gweill, ac maent yn trafod cynnwys y craidd. Mae'r newididau i osod TGAU rhifedd ac iaith yn lle'r cymwysterau Sgiliau Hanfodol Cymru yn fantais fawr. Rwy'n credu y bydd hynny yn cryfhau'r cymhwyster. Mae potensial arbennig i'r fagloriaeth—mae'n hyblyg—ond mae angen cryfhau'r safonau.

[136] **Simon Thomas:** Mae gennyf ddaugwestiwn bach ar hynny'n benodol. Roeddech yn sôn am y craidd. A ydych yn meddwl bod y craidd hwnnw yn ddigon eang ar hyn o bryd, neu a fydddech am iddo gael ei ehangu? A oes rhywbeth y bydddech eisiau ychwanegu ato? Yn ail, roedd hefyd sôn yn adroddiad Huw Evans am sut y gallech weithio ar wella sgiliau elfennol, yn enwedig llythrennedd a rhifedd, hyd yn oed ar ôl 16. Hynny yw, os nad oedd rhywun wedi

collecting data on qualifications and course completion rates for students aged 16 to 18 that is the same for schools, sixth forms and further education. There is no way of comparing outcomes at the moment, and that is true for pupils, parents and inspectors.

Simon Thomas: I want to move on to a part of this pattern, namely the Welsh baccalaureate, because your report states that there is too much variation in the provision and that it has not been tailored to the individual. You conclude that there is a way of developing the baccalaureate but that more robust foundations are needed. Of course, we have heard during the last year the findings of Huw Evans' report on this and on moving towards grading the baccalaureate. What is your assessment of the potential of the changes that are being proposed for the baccalaureate to improve the provision as it is at the moment?

Ms Keane: I was a member of that board, so I am confident that we are travelling in the right direction in this regard. There is huge potential in the baccalaureate to give a broader curriculum range for pupils. I have visited schools where there has been excellent provision in terms of Wales, Europe and the world, and pupils can do individual studies and achieve high standards in that regard. The challenge is that there is too much variation in terms of standards. Changes are in the pipeline, and they are discussing the core content. The changes are to put the numeracy and literacy GCSE in place of the Essential Skills Wales qualifications is very beneficial. I believe that will strengthen the qualification. There is real potential for the baccalaureate—it is flexible—but we need to improve standards.

Simon Thomas: I have two small questions specifically on that. You talk about the core. Do you think that that core is broad enough at present, or would you wish to see it made broader? Is there anything that you would wish to add to it? Secondly, there also talk in Huw Evans's report about how you could work to improve elementary skills, especially literacy and numeracy, even post-16. That is, if someone had not reached the standard, work would still be done with them, whatever

cyrraedd y safon, byddech yn dal i weithio gyda nhw beth bynnag fo'r *setting*. Pa mor ymarferol fyddai hynny yng nghyd-destun y fagloriaeth, achos rwy'n cymryd mai yn y cyd-destun hwnnw y byddem yn ei wneud?

[137] **Ms Keane:** Rwy'n credu ei bod yn bwysig bod pawb yn dal i weithio ar ôl 16 tuag at TGAU mewn rhifedd a llythrennedd os nad ydynt wedi ei gael yn barod. Rhai blynyddoedd yn ôl cyn dyfodiad sgiliau allweddol, roedd pawb oedd wedi methu yn ailsefyll TGAU mewn Saesneg, Cymraeg neu fathemateg mewn colegau addysg bellach. Rwyf o'r farn ein bod angen cymhwyster safonol fel TGAU i osod y safon, ac y dylai—mae sôn am dystysgrif genedlaethol a thystysgrif genedlaethol ôl-16—symud ymlaen at TGAU yn hynny hefyd.

[138] **Simon Thomas:** A'r craidd? A ydych yn hapus gyda'r craidd yn y fagloriaeth?

[139] **Ms Keane:** Yn bersonol, rwyf yn credu bod ystod y craidd, a'r hyn sydd yn cael ei drafod ar gyfer ystod y craidd, yn ddigonol. Yr hyn y byddwn efallai yn edrych arno yw pa bump cwrs TGAU y byddech yn eu cynnig i roi ystod o brofiadau ar gyfer lefel 2, er enghraifft, gan gynnwys rhifedd, iaith ac efallai gwyddoniaeth i roi ystod ehangach.

[140] **Mr Rowlands:** Mae dadl y dylid cynnwys gwyddoniaeth yn lefel 2. Un o fanteision hynny fyddai sefydlu cydberthynas glir â'r cwricwlwm, lle mae'n rhan o'r cwricwlwm craidd, a bod y cymhwyster felly yn cyfateb iddo. Rydym yn argymhell y dylai gwyddoniaeth ddod yn rhan o'r craidd, ond efallai nid yn syth, a'n bod yn cymryd amser i'w adeiladu i mewn.

[141] **Ms Keane:** Mantais y fagloriaeth yw ei bod yn rhoi hyblygrwydd i'r dyfodol ac y gallwn symud ymlaen a newid ei siâp a'i ffurf i ymateb i ofynion yn y dyfodol, achos mae'n cynnwys y cymwysterau sy'n bodoli ar hyn o bryd, felly mae'n agor y drws yn hytrach na chau'r drws, fel yr oedd bagoloriaeth Lloegr yn mynd i'w wneud.

[142] **Lynne Neagle:** You referred in your report to the fact that there are no

the setting. How practicable would that be in the context of the baccalaureate, because I assume that it would be within that context that we would do it?

Ms Keane: I think that it is important that everyone continues to work post-16 towards a GCSE in numeracy and literacy if it has not already been achieved. Some years ago before the introduction of key skills, everyone who had failed English, Welsh or mathematics GCSE would re-sit. I am of the opinion that we need a standard qualification such as GCSE to set the standard, and that we should—there is talk of a national certificate and a post-16 national certificate—also move towards a GCSE in that regard too.

Simon Thomas: And the core? Are you content with the core in the baccalaureate?

Ms Keane: Personally, I believe that the range of the core, and what is being discussed for the range of the core, is adequate. What I would perhaps look at is what five GCSE courses you would offer to provide that range of experiences at level 2, for example, including numeracy, literacy and perhaps science to provide a broader range.

Mr Rowlands: There is an argument that science should be included in level 2. One of the advantages of that would be to establish a co-relationship with the curriculum, where it is part of the core curriculum, so that the qualification corresponds to that. We recommend that science should become part of the core, but maybe not immediately, and that we take time to build it in.

Ms Keane: The advantage of the baccalaureate is that it provides flexibility for the future and that we can proceed and change its shape and form to meet future requirements, because it includes qualifications that are already in place, therefore it opens the door rather than closes it, as the English baccalaureate would have done.

comprehensive national data on achievement and attainment at age 18. Do you think that we should be collecting that type of data and monitoring those outcomes, and, if so, how do you think it should be done?

10.30 a.m.

[143] **Ms Keane:** I think that we need to capture equivalent data. At the moment, data are collected but they are not the same data, so there is no equivalence. Data on completion rates are not collected at all in schools. I mentioned earlier that some students drop out of school at 17 and go to FE college. However, if they do that now, we have no data to prove that it is happening. We need to monitor that to see how big an issue it is. We know, from our inspections, that it is an issue here and there, but we do not have the data to give you a national view. We need that national view to inform planning for tertiary provision for over 16; I mean tertiary in the wider sense. What is the best way of organising post-16 education for our students? In order to make those planning decisions, we need to know where we are succeeding and where we are doing less well. We cannot make those comparisons at the moment. The Lifelong Learning Wales Record collects past-level data at A-level, but that does not give you a sense of the quality of what is being produced there. We need data that will tell us the A* to B attainment levels, we need completion data from registration and enrolment, and we need destinations data to see which institutions are most effective at getting good destinations for their students.

[144] **Lynne Neagle:** So, you think that the Welsh Government should put in place a system in which all that is collected.

[145] **Ms Keane:** Yes.

[146] **Christine Chapman:** Given the time, we will have to draw this session to a close. I thank you for your evidence. We will send you a transcript of the meeting so that you can check it for factual accuracy. You will be with us after the break, so it will be useful to stop for 15 minutes. Thank you for this part of the session. I wanted to mention that Members had other questions, so, if you are happy, I will send them to you and you can respond in writing.

[147] **Ms Keane:** That is fine, thank you.

[148] **Christine Chapman:** We will now take a short break and reconvene at 10.45 a.m. for our attendance and behaviour inquiry.

*Gohiriwyd y cyfarfod rhwng 10.32 a.m. a 10.48 a.m.
The meeting adjourned between 10.32 a.m. and 10.48 a.m.*

Ymchwiliad i Bresenoldeb ac Ymddygiad—Sesiwn Dystiolaeth Inquiry into Attendance and Behaviour—Evidence Session

[149] **Christine Chapman:** Welcome back, everyone. We continue our inquiry into attendance and behaviour. I welcome Estyn once again. For the record, we have Ann Keane, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales, and Simon Brown and Meilyr Rowlands, strategic directors.

[150] Thank you for your paper; Members will have had an opportunity to read it, so we will go straight into questions. I want to start off by asking about the issue of poverty and disadvantage. In your paper, you identify the link between poor attendance and behaviour and poverty and disadvantage. How widespread are the effects of disadvantage on behaviour and attendance in schools across Wales?

[151] **Ms Keane:** They are widespread. It is not only our inspections that reveal this; there are many academic studies in which these correlations have been explored, as well as the detailed reasons for them. I read Professor Ken Reid's most illuminating papers, for instance—some of which I had read previously—and they tell us that any school serving a deprived area must look to its resources in a strategic way in order to make up for the deprivation that those pupils experience. So, there is a correlation and our inspection reports bear that out, but, crucially, our inspection reports also testify to the success of certain schools in beating the trend by overcoming some of those difficulties. They do this by systematic planning and training, putting in place school-wide policies and follow-up procedures, working with multi agencies outside schools, such as social services and education welfare officers, and asking the bigger questions about the curriculum and about engagement. Pupils from deprived backgrounds might have failed, generationally, to experience the benefits of education. There might be attitudinal issues—they might have parents who experienced failure at school. They might also have very practical obstacles to going to school or places to do their homework. Supporting early reading development is also an issue—parental involvement in children's education is a big factor in ensuring the success of that education; we know that from all sorts of other studies.

[152] **Christine Chapman:** You have highlighted very good practice in schools, and we have heard of schools that are very good at tackling this issue, which is great, but is the best practice being spread quickly enough? Are we doing enough in that quarter?

[153] **Ms Keane:** That is a very good question, because this does not just touch on poverty. It is one of the biggest challenges in education in Wales. We know that we have good practice and we know where it is. We point to it on the Estyn website and we explain why it is good practice. We know that in Cefn Hengoed Community School, for instance, in year 11, which is traditionally one of the most difficult years for maintaining the attendance of children in poor areas, attendance rates went from just over 60% to over 90%, because they put in place the measures that we describe in detail.

[154] **Christine Chapman:** Why is it not happening? If the good practice is there for all to see, why is it not happening in those schools that need to do something?

[155] **Ms Keane:** This is the greatest challenge in Wales. We know what good practice looks like in literacy and in relation to poverty, but the issue is how we ensure that other schools roll out that good practice. It is, in part, a matter of commitment and accepting that moral imperative, but it is also a matter of joining up initiatives and ensuring that regional consortia and school improvement and education welfare officers are on board in delivering that. That requires some sort of strategic approach at a national level.

[156] **Christine Chapman:** What about early intervention in schools in tackling the impact of poverty? Do you think that there is enough being done in that respect?

[157] **Ms Keane:** Family learning schemes, in particular, are working very well, but there are issues. We have done reports on family learning schemes over a number of years and there are issues with the flexibility of how that is funded and who qualifies for it. Early intervention is one mechanism in this multilayered approach, and all of them have to be in place for things to work.

[158] **Jenny Rathbone:** Is there any evidence that Flying Start is having an impact on improving attendance and the issue of disadvantage, or is it too early and too patchy to say at the moment?

[159] **Ms Keane:** We do not inspect Flying Start.

[160] **Jenny Rathbone:** No, but in areas where Flying Start programmes are undertaken, are you seeing that they are beating the trend?

[161] **Ms Keane:** I would say that, where there are initiatives that support children in the early years, like breakfast clubs, Flying Start and so on, yes, they are having a beneficial effect.

[162] **Mr Rowlands:** There is something a little bit paradoxical about early intervention, because all the evidence suggests that things get worse in secondary education—attendance is worse and the boy/girl gap and the poverty gap widen. So, you might think that we should be spending our money on secondary education, but that gap starts in the early years. So, although it may seem paradoxical, it is probably better to spend the money to nip it in the bud earlier on. All of these things seem to be interrelated. If someone does not do well in school, they do not want to go there, so their attendance behaviour may not be as good, and they may not be doing well in school because their literacy is not very good. The difference between boys and girls, for example, is probably down to literacy. You need intervention earlier on.

[163] **Christine Chapman:** Professor Ken Reid said that the truancy issue is a cry for help. There is always a reason for it. It does not just happen, so we need to understand that better.

[164] **Ms Keane:** That is why the multi-agency approach is useful in particular cases, because it is a family issue. You need social services and other agencies to work together to have this wraparound-the-child approach. We support that child because there are emotional, practical and attitudinal issues in existence. Early intervention does not guarantee attendance at a later stage. As Meilyr said, the gap opens up much wider in key stage 3 in secondary school.

[165] **Mr Brown:** We had a case in St Mark's primary school in Haverfordwest, where 45% have free school meals. It is an example of nipping things in the bud early, because they have a multi-agency approach with behavioural support, family support and a whole set of agencies coming together to intervene at a very early stage. Again, the issue is the need to replicate that good practice across the rest of the authorities.

[166] **Suzy Davies:** We heard from Professor Ken Reid, and it appears through the whole of the inquiry we have done so far, about the lack of teacher awareness and teacher training to look at attendance and behaviour. Do you think that the actual teacher training curriculum should include more of an emphasis on how to deal with attendance and behaviour, or do you think that it is best addressed within the school? What do you think about the difference between the lack of teacher training and lack of teacher commitment, which is what you identify in your report?

[167] **Ms Keane:** It is important to cover attendance and behaviour in initial teacher training. In the annual report that I produced about two years ago, I stated clearly that the newly qualified teachers needed to be supported in more depth on certain aspects, and one of them was behaviour. The Masters in educational practice has a module now on that aspect. While you could strengthen the coverage, to some extent, in the initial teacher education and training, there is no doubt that it is in practice, when teachers work in schools and face these practical challenges, that they need to develop their armoury of tools and skills to deal with some of these issues.

[168] **Suzy Davies:** Should they be looking to the school leader, presumably the head in some cases, or should they be looking to external academic providers coming in during in-service training days and so forth? Which do you think is the better way to help younger teachers in particular?

[169] **Ms Keane:** I am a great believer in the importance of leadership within schools. I do not see INSET as something that you just buy in from outside. Effective in-service training is something that is driven by the leadership of the school. A characteristic of some of the case studies that we note is the strength, understanding and in-depth commitment of the leadership to that. We are not saying that teachers are totally uncommitted, but simply that lack of commitment can sometimes be an issue. That sets challenges for the leaders and senior managers of schools. They need to develop a vision for how a school will improve the way it deals with issues of attendance and behaviour, but that they do that with the teachers. We know that the most effective form of INSET requires some sort of ownership of the process by the teachers. That is why professional learning communities have a track record of success.

11.00 a.m.

[170] It is simply that the teachers themselves bring their own professional commitment to that process. I would say—and I said it in the annual report—that some headteachers of schools, some principals of colleges and some proprietors of work-based learning training providers are, in effect, chief executive officers of quite complex businesses, in a way. They have to manage the finance, they have to run the governance of the school, they have to make sure that everything meets regulations, and health and safety. In other words, there is a plethora of infrastructure requirements on leaders of schools, colleges, and so on that has nothing directly to do with teaching or learning. I would like to re-focus some of those heads—and many of them already are focused on this, so I am not being critical of all headteachers by any stretch of the imagination. The ones who are not getting ‘excellent’ need to focus their planning and their work on the core business of schools and colleges, which is the education and learning experience of learners. Unless you have them there, and they are attending, and doing so punctually, then they will not learn. I would like to see headteachers offer much more direct leadership and be involved with issues to do with managing attendance and behaviour, and we know from what we have seen in our inspections that where heads do this, it works.

[171] **Suzy Davies:** I just have one short supplementary on that, if that is okay. In your investigations, have you come across any examples where the headteacher or particular school leader is really committed to this, but for some reason the staff lower down in the hierarchy just are not taking up the leads from that school leader?

[172] **Ms Keane:** Well, there are pockets of reluctance, maybe, in some schools to any kind of change management. If you want to change things, you will not always get everybody on board straight away, because a lot of people will have faith in the fact that they have been doing something one way for a long time. That goes straight to one of the basic skills of leadership.

[173] **Suzy Davies:** I understand that, and that is why I was asking the question. It goes to the heart of how good a leader they are.

[174] **Ms Keane:** Exactly. Defining that vision in a democratic way, and not in a prescriptive way, is important. The best leaders are not leaders who come along and tell everybody else what to do. They are people who see where people are and see how to shift that culture to a point where a new system can be introduced successfully.

[175] **Rebecca Evans:** I would like to turn to education other than at school for a moment. In your evidence you say that the success of pupil referral units in

[176] ‘re-integrating pupils or...offering a broad curriculum varies unacceptably’,

[177] and that

[178] ‘pupil-planning systems do not address the management of difficult behaviour with individual pupils well enough.’

[179] Have you seen any improvement in the provision of pupil referral units since the publication of the Welsh Government’s action plan?

[180] **Ms Keane:** We have not monitored that directly, I have to say, though I would expect there to be an impact. There has been a lot of raising of awareness of issues to do with behaviour management in Wales over the past two years, partly deriving from the inspection that we did with the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales in Pembrokeshire, and partly from the survey comprising unannounced visits that we made to pupil referral units. There has been a lot of discussion about ‘time out’, and I think we are now in a better place nationally than we were a few years ago. We know from going to local authorities now that there is a much higher level of awareness about issues to do with child protection, record keeping and so on.

[181] To come back to pupil referral units themselves, yes, there is still too great a variability in standards. There are some very good ones, and they take different approaches to behaviour. This is a key feature. One of the negative aspects of ‘time out’ is its punitive use with pupils, and it goes back then to training teachers in terms of helping pupils to manage their behaviour as opposed to imposing ‘time out’, or anything else, as a sanction for poor behaviour. It is this moving away from punitive measures in terms of behaviour towards the more detailed planning and one-to-one work that is necessary with individual pupils for them to be able to develop a programme of managing their own emotions and their own behaviour. That requires training teachers in the best pupil referral units that they are competent at that. We found in the survey that, while the management of pupils’ behaviour was generally acceptable, record-keeping and this balance between the punitive and restorative use of behaviour management was not always right. In the ones where we say that, individually, standards are not good enough there is too much punitive use of behaviour management as opposed to supportively helping those individuals to manage their emotions and their anger.

[182] **Rebecca Evans:** Professor Ken Reid told us that Wales has an acute shortage of provision in terms of education otherwise than at school. Do you agree that there is an acute shortage and, if so, what is the implication of that?

[183] **Ms Keane:** The 14-19 learning pathways were intended to provide a much wider range of experiences and routes for pupils. I think that that has worked to a large extent for most pupils, but I think that there are still pupils who need what used to be called ‘the alternative curriculum’, which is a more customised individual programme. We have been concerned about this issue of the alternative curriculum. Who is providing it and where? It is quite difficult to map. We have tried to map it. Sometimes, local authorities commission work-based learning providers to provide some work experience for pupils. Quite a lot of this is marginal provision and it is quite difficult to map. I think that it would be timely to look at what is happening nationally. We started to look at it last year, but we found it quite difficult to pin down. It is a bit like some PRUs, which are a bit come and go and not always registered when they should be. Because it is marginal, education other than at school is not mainstream and it is quite difficult to pin down sometimes.

[184] **Christine Chapman:** As a committee, we have looked at whether we will do an inquiry on the pupil referral units. It will not be just now, but in the near future; so, that might be interesting.

[185] **Ms Keane:** I think that it would bear for scrutiny.

[186] **Christine Chapman:** Yes. That is what we need to do.

[187] **Mr Rowlands:** It is only when they are called PRUs that they will be registered. Some of the alternative provision might not be inspected by us because it is not registered. The structures of the PRUs vary enormously. You might have one PRU with several sites, or in another authority you would have many different PRUs. We have examples of two or three sites that are the same PRU, where the provision is completely different in type and, more importantly, in quality. That is just the official PRUs that we inspect. So, the whole area is very complex and would probably benefit from some sort of mapping.

[188] **Christine Chapman:** We are looking. I am sure that we will—

[189] **Ms Keane:** The management arrangements are also sometimes managed by local authorities, but are sometimes quite hands-off. I do believe, however—and perhaps Simon might say something about this—that, since we have raised issues about child protection, time out rooms, behaviour management, and PRUs, we have seen local authorities being much more responsive in relation to their practices. We do look at this, of course, in our inspections of local authority education services.

[190] **Christine Chapman:** We are running a bit short of time, but there are themes that we need to cover. Jenny, Aled and Simon wish to ask questions.

[191] **Jenny Rathbone:** You talk about the fact that pupil referral units should be short-stay centres with the aim of reintegration into mainstream schooling. Where is the evidence that any of them are doing that? Once a school has dispatched a pupil to a pupil referral unit, as far as it is concerned, that child is not coming back. We will be talking to Snap Cymru next. Unfortunately, it says that it has dealt with 92 illegal exclusions, and those are just the ones that it has dealt with. There is quite a lot of evidence that schools are not behaving according to the rules and are trying to get rid of challenging pupils. What is Estyn doing about that? If schools are dumping challenging kids because they think that they are going to affect their statistics and banding, that is devastating in terms of our need to meet the needs of our most needy children.

[192] **Ms Keane:** We look at exclusions and the data. It is more difficult with unofficial practices. If pupils are not there when we inspect—we inspect, not pupils individually, but schools—I will not deny that sometimes it is difficult to track some of those pupils. That issue would bear further scrutiny. We would be happy to follow a remit that would look at this in more depth.

[193] **Aled Roberts:** Mae rhai awdurdodau yn symud o system PRU i unedau o fewn ysgolion. Rydym wedi cael tystiolaeth bod llawer o ysgolion yn anffodlon â'r syniad hwnnw oherwydd yr effaith a gaiff ar gyrhaeddiad yn yr ysgol. A ydych yn teimlo bod hynny'n adlewyrchiad teg o'r dystiolaeth rydych wedi'i gweld? O ran plant sy'n derbyn eu haddysg gartref, rydym hefyd wedi cael tystiolaeth bod nifer o awdurdodau yn eu methu am eu bod yn cael llai nag 20 awr yr wythnos o addysg. Faint o broblem yw hynny?

Aled Roberts: Some authorities are moving from a PRU system to units within schools. We have had evidence that many schools are unhappy with that idea because of the effect it has on attainment within a school. Do you feel that that is a fair reflection of the evidence you have seen? For children who are educated at home, we have also had evidence that a number of authorities are failing them because they have fewer than 20 hours of education per week. How much of a problem is that?

[194] **Ms Keane:** Mae cael llai na hynny **Ms Keane:** It is a problem if the number of

yn broblem. Rydym yn adrodd ar hynny yn ein hadroddiadau ar awdurdodau addysg. Rwyf wedi bod mewn ysgolion ag unedau. Un fantais o gael uned mewn ysgol yw ei bod yn ei gwneud yn haws i ddisgyblion integreiddio yn y prif lif am rannau o'r wythnos. Rwyf wedi gweld hynny'n digwydd. Nid yw ysgolion efallai'n hoffi bod data ar ganlyniadau'r unedau wedi'u cynnwys yn nata'r prif lif, ond mae Estyn yn ystyried y sefyllfa honno wrth inni arolygu. Felly, rydym yn trio bod yn degâ'r ysgol os oes ganddi uned. Dyna'r unig beth y gallaf ei ddweud am hynny.

[195] **Aled Roberts:** A yw'r sefyllfa wedi gwaethygu oherwydd effaith bandio, lle mae data ar absenoldeb a chyrhaeddiad yn gweithio yn erbyn ysgol os yw'n cytuno i gael uned felly yn yr ysgol?

[196] **Mr Rowlands:** Nid yw mor glir â hynny. Dylai pob plentyn mewn PRU fod yn *dual registered*. Hynny yw, dylent fod ar lyfrau'r ysgol yn ogystal ag ar lyfrau'r PRU. Felly, ni ddylai wneud gwahaniaeth. Ond, rwy'n cyfaddef, yn ymarferol, fod pob math o wahanol systemau ar waith. Er enghraifft, mae unedau mewn rhai ysgolion sy'n cynnwys plant o nifer o ysgolion. Felly, mae'r sefyllfa yn hynod o gymhleth. Mae'r unedau mewn ysgolion yn ychwanegu at y cymhlethdod rydym wedi'i ddisgrifio ar gyfer PRUs. Weithiau, mae'r unedau yn rhan ffurfiol o'r ysgol ac weithiau maent yn rhan o'r awdurdod. Yn ogystal â chynnwys plant o nifer o ysgolion, gall unedau hefyd gynnwys plant o nifer o awdurdodau. Felly, mae'r sefyllfa yn gymhleth. Yn dechnegol, dylai plant mewn PRUs fod ar lyfrau'r ysgol hefyd, a dylai eu cyraeddiadau gyfrannu at yr ysgol yn ogystal. Dyna pam mai rhywbeth dros dro y dylai hyn fod. Maen nhw fod i ddod nôl i'r ysgol.

[197] **Bethan Jenkins:** I symud ymlaen at bresenoldeb, rydych yn y dweud yn eich adroddiad nad yw'r canllawiau, hyd yn oed mewn ardaloedd lle maent wedi gwerthuso canllawiau penodol i ddelio â gwaharddiadau a phresenoldeb, yn ddigon effeithiol ac nad ydych wedi gweld eu dylanwad ar waith hyd yn hyn. A allwch chi esbonio hynny'n fwy manwl a dweud pam mae hynny'n digwydd?

hours is lower than that. We report on that in our reports on education authorities. I have visited schools where there are units. One advantage of having a unit in a school is that it makes it easier for pupils to integrate into the mainstream for parts of the week. I have seen that happen. Schools may not want to see the units' data on attainment included in the mainstream data, but Estyn takes that situation into account in its inspections, in that we try to be fair with a school if it has a unit. That is all I can say in that regard.

Aled Roberts: Has the situation worsened because of the impact of banding, where data on absence and attainment can be damaging to a school if it agrees to have such a unit?

Mr Rowlands: It is not as clear as that. Every child in a PRU should be dual registered. That is, they should be on the school's books as well as the PRU's books. Therefore, it should not make a difference. However, I admit that, in practice, there are all sorts of different systems in place. For example, units in some schools include children from a number of schools. So, it is a complex situation. The complexity that we have described with regard to PRUs is compounded by these units in schools. Sometimes, the units are officially part of the school and sometimes they come under the authority. As well as having children from a number of schools, units can also include children from a number of authorities. So, the situation is complex. Technically, children in PRUs should be on their school's books as well, and their attainments should contribute to the school as well. That is why it is supposed to be a temporary measure. They are supposed to return to school.

Bethan Jenkins: Moving on to attendance, you say in your report that the guidance, even in areas where specific guidelines to deal with exclusions and attendance have been evaluated, is not effective enough and that you have not seen the impact so far. Can you explain that in more detail and explain why it is happening?

11.15 a.m.

[198] **Ms Keane:** Mae'n ddrwg gennyf; dylanwad beth?

Ms Keane: I am sorry; the impact of what?

[199] **Bethan Jenkins:** Dylanwad y canllawiau y mae ysgolion yn eu cael er mwyn targedu presenoldeb a lleihau gwaharddiadau. Mae'r canllawiau yn bodoli, ond efallai nad ydynt wedi cael digon o ddylanwad eto.

Bethan Jenkins: The impact of the guidelines that schools have in order to target attendance and reduce exclusions. The guidelines exist, but they may not be having enough influence yet.

[200] **Ms Keane:** Credaf ein bod wedi dweud eu bod yn cael mwy o ddylanwad yn y sector uwchradd nag yn y sector cynradd. Croesawn y ffaith bod cyfraddau presenoldeb wedi codi i 92% mewn ysgolion uwchradd, ac i 94%, yn genedlaethol, mewn ysgolion cynradd. Fodd bynnag, dylent fod yn uwch yn y sector cynradd. Y llynedd, yr oedd gan un o bob tair ysgol uwchradd ac un o bob chwe ysgol gynradd ganrannau presenoldeb anfoddfaol.

Ms Keane: I believe that what we have said is that they are having more of an impact in the secondary than in the primary sector. We welcome the fact that attendance rates have increased to 92% in secondary schools, and to 94%, nationally, in primary schools. However, they should be higher in the primary sector. Last year, one in three secondary schools and one in six primary schools had attendance percentages that were not adequate.

[201] Os edrychwch ar ffigurau Lloegr, fe welwch ein bod yn dal i fod ar ei hôl hi o ran absenoldeb yn y sector cynradd a'r sector uwchradd. Felly, er bod y tueddiadau ar i fyny, nid ydym yn fodlon ar le'r ydym o ran presenoldeb. Fodd bynnag, credaf ein bod wedi dweud bod pethau fel Engage, sef un o raglenni Consortiwm Addysg De Orllewin a Chanolbarth Cymru ar gyfer helpu ysgolion i gynnal presenoldeb, yn gweithio'n dda, ond nid oes digon o bethau felly'n digwydd yn yr ysgolion cynradd. Hynny yw, os ydych yn colli disgyblion yn yr ysgolion cynradd, mae'n anos fyth eu cadw a'u denu yn ôl yn yr ysgolion uwchradd.

If you look at the figures for England, you will see that we are still behind in terms of absenteeism in the primary and secondary sectors. Therefore, although the trends are upwards, we are not content with where we currently sit in terms of attendance. However, I believe that we have said that things such as Engage, which is one of the South West and Mid Wales Education Consortium's programmes, which assists schools to maintain attendance levels, work well, but there are not enough such things happening in primary schools. If you lose pupils in the primary schools, it becomes exceptionally difficult to keep them and to bring them back in the secondary schools.

[202] **Bethan Jenkins:** Mae hynny'n debyg i'r pwynt a glywsom yn gynharach o ran y gwahaniaethau rhwng ysgolion a rhannu arfer da. A oes angen, felly, i'r consortia rhanbarthol rannu'r syniadau da hyn er mwyn cael patrwm mwy sylfaenol yn y dyfodol, yn hytrach na bod gennym rai sy'n well na'i gilydd?

Bethan Jenkins: That is similar to the point we heard earlier regarding the differences between schools and sharing best practice. Is there a need, therefore, for the regional consortia to share these good ideas, so that this pattern is established more generally in the future, rather than having some that are better than others?

[203] **Ms Keane:** Hoffwn weld partneriaethau rhwng ysgolion, yn ogystal ag isadeiledd sy'n cynnal partneriaethau er mwyn rhannu arfer da. Mae hyn braidd yn ad hoc ar hyn o bryd, ac mae angen mwy o

Ms Keane: I would like to see partnerships between schools, as well as an infrastructure that maintains those partnerships so that best practice can be shared. It is slightly ad hoc at present, and we need more partnerships and

bartneriaethau a mwy o gydysymud rhwng ysgolion, er mwyn rhannu arfer da. Efallai, hyd yn oed, bod angen ffederaleiddio ysgolion, a rhoi un arweinydd arnynt, ac edrych ar ffyrdd mwy hyblyg o ddwyn ysgolion at ei gilydd er mwyn rhannu arfer da yn systematig, yn hytrach na'i adael i'r arweinwyr. Gwyddom fod gan benaethiaid ysgolion dipyn o annibyniaeth o ran llywodraethu eu hysgolion, ac mae ganddynt grwpiau o lywodraethwyr yn eu cefnogi. Fodd bynnag, mae angen iddynt deimlo'r her, a'i themlo yn fwy systematig.

more co-ordination between schools, in order to share best practice. There may even be a need to federalise schools, and to have one leader in place, as well as looking at more flexible ways of bringing schools together so that they can systematically share good practice, rather than leaving it to the leaders. We know that headteachers have quite some independence in terms of governing their schools, and they have governors supporting them. However, they need to feel the challenge, and to feel it more systematically.

[204] **Bethan Jenkins:** Cytunaf â hynny.

Bethan Jenkins: I agree with that.

[205] **Christine Chapman:** Do you have a question on this point, Simon?

[206] **Simon Thomas:** Pa mor ddibynadwy yw'r data ar draws Cymru gyfan? A allwn ni ddefnyddio'r data mewn ffordd gadarn a dibynadwy, gan gymharu ardal ag ardal ac ysgol ag ysgol? Gofynnaf y cwestiwn yn sgîl yr hyn yr wyf yn ei glywed, sef bod ffyrdd gwahanol o gofrestru. Nid yw cofrestr ar ddiwedd y dydd, er enghraifft, yn rhoi'r darlun llawn o ran presenoldeb drwy'r dydd mewn dosbarth, nac o ran yr hyn yr oeddem ni yn arfer ei alw yn 'mitcho'. Felly, a oes gennych ffydd ein bod yn gallu defnyddio a dadansoddi'r data mewn ffordd gwbl ddibynadwy, neu a oes angen gwell arfer gan rai ysgolion, neu awdurdodau, o ran bod yn fwy cadarn ynglŷn â data?

Simon Thomas: How reliable is the data across Wales as a whole? Can we use that data in a robust and reliable way, comparing area with area and school with school? I ask this question as a result of what I am hearing, namely that there are different ways of registering. A register at the end of the day, for example, does not give the whole picture regarding attendance during the day in class, nor does it give the whole picture in terms of what we used to call 'mitching'. Therefore, do you have confidence that we can use and analyse the data in a completely reliable way, or is there a need for improved practice by some schools, or authorities, in terms of being more robust with data?

[207] **Ms Keane:** Nid yw ein harolygwyr, drwy'r trwch, yn dweud wrthym, 'Gwrandewch, mae'r data yr ydym wedi ei gael yn set data craidd Cymru ar bresenoldeb yn hollol anghywir.' Nid wyf yn clywed y neges honno gan arolygwyr, o ran ysgolion nac awdurdodau.

Ms Keane: Our inspectors, for the most part, do not say to us, 'Look, this data that we have received in the core data set for Wales on attendance is entirely wrong.' I am not getting such a message from inspectors, in relation to schools or authorities.

[208] **Mr Rowlands:** Gwyddom fod amrywiaethau, ond maent yn gymharol fân. Mae'r data a gawn ar bresenoldeb yn weddol gadarn. Fodd bynnag, mae'r data o ran *exclusions* yn llai cadarn. Fel y clywsom yn gynharach, rydym yn amau nad yw rhywfaint o'r data hynny yn ddibynadwy.

Mr Rowlands: We know that there are variations, but they are quite small. The data that we have on attendance is quite robust. However, the data on exclusion is not quite as robust. As we heard earlier, we suspect that some of that data is not quite as reliable.

[209] **Christine Chapman:** We have another 10 minutes or so for this item, and we have quite a few questions to get through, if we can. Therefore, I ask Members to be concise, if possible. Jenny Rathbone has the next questions.

[210] **Jenny Rathbone:** You say in your evidence that this issue is best addressed when people do it on a multi-agency partnership basis. Why is this not more widespread? With this particular issue, it is obvious that we need to have a variety of agencies involved.

[211] **Ms Keane:** You have to address that question to the local authorities and to the schools themselves. What we do is report on what we find. I do not know if Simon wants to say something.

[212] **Mr Brown:** I think it is down to the quality of partnerships in some local authorities, which we do comment on. Some authorities are better engaged internally with their own departments, so they have better relationships between housing, social services and other departments. You also have the impact of other agencies outside of the local authority itself—health, child and adolescent mental health services et cetera—and some authorities are just much better at co-ordinating and getting the agencies together to target support at particular families or particular individuals.

[213] **Jenny Rathbone:** Is there any evidence that regional consortia are going to improve this issue, or is it going to fragment things?

[214] **Mr Brown:** The issue with the regional consortia is that we have not started to inspect them or look at them yet; they only came on stream in the autumn. However, I went to a meeting yesterday of the Education Achievement Service in south-east Wales, which was showing its forward plans of work, and attendance, for example, is one of the things it is factoring in. So, the system leaders will not only look at performance within the schools there, but they will also look at other causal effects. As Ann pointed out, if children are not in school, they cannot learn, so getting attendance right is a prerequisite of that. The EAS is putting in place plans to bring in work of the education welfare officers and other local authority officers into the work of the system leaders, because they see that you need a holistic approach to improvement.

[215] **Jenny Rathbone:** The Government has directed local authorities to devolve more of the budgets to schools directly, but I have some anxieties that that is collapsing some of the partnership working that is essential for addressing these issues and that schools are not quite ready to pick it up and commission these services. Do you have any concerns about this, because it could lead to a hiatus?

[216] **Mr Brown:** We do not have any evidence of that at the moment. As we get into the inter-relationship of regional consortia and the local authorities and the schools, and the services that are left in local authorities, apart from school improvement, we will get more of a feel for that.

[217] **Ms Keane:** We are going to inspect the regional consortia from September 2014-15 to 2015-16. In the interim of 2013-14, we are going to undertake a remit to take a really open look at the working of the consortia, to look at the challenges and at how they are developing. So, we should have a more detailed report on some of these aspects of their work within the year.

[218] **Jenny Rathbone:** The concerns I have is that, because of the shift in where the money is going, we are seeing a reduction in EWOs and in educational psychologists, and these are precisely the people who help address some of the complex emotional issues that young people have.

[219] **Ms Keane:** You are right, and it is resource intensive of course. We talk about multi-agency working and these forums that involve education psychologists, EWOs and people from outside the school for example, and they are expensive.

[220] **Mr Brown:** The issue for authorities, as we said in the annual report, is that they have a finite resource, which they have to target more forensically perhaps than they have in the past. The better authorities are putting a time constraint on the amount of support they give to particular individuals. However, that means that they have to think a lot harder and prioritise by doing a sort of triage of who has the greatest need for the targeting of those services as they reduce.

[221] **Aled Roberts:** A oes pryder ynglŷn â'r holl oedi ynglŷn â sut mae'r consortia yn gweithredu? Rydych yn dweud na fyddwch yn cynnal arolygon o'r consortia tan fis Medi 2014, ac mae eich tystiolaeth yn yr adroddiad blynyddol yn dweud nad yw lles addysg wedi bod yn flaenoriaeth o fewn gwasanaethau gwella ysgolion yn yr hen awdurdodau lleol. Rydym wedi derbyn tystiolaeth bod nifer y swyddogion lles yn lleihau, ac rwy'n rhannu pryderon Jenny o ran hynny. Bydd gwasanaethau lles addysg yn aros o fewn awdurdodau lleol tra bo'r consortia yn gyfrifol am wella ysgolion. A oes perygl y bydd y cydweithio'n gwaethygu o dan y drefn newydd? Yn eich tystiolaeth, rydych yn dweud nad yw wedi bod yn effeithiol iawn o dan yr hen drefn ychwaith.

[222] **Ms Keane:** Mae peryglon wrth newid o unrhyw system i system newydd. Rydych yn iawn i ddweud bod risg y bydd chwalu swyddogaethau a diffyg cydgysylltu oherwydd bod y swyddogaethau'n symud. Ond, byddwn yn monitro sut mae hynny'n mynd yn ei flaen yn ofalus eleni, fel y gallwn adrodd ar unrhyw ddiffygion, os oes diffygion yn y system.

[223] **Aled Roberts:** A fydd eich adroddiadau ar awdurdodau lleol yn dangos a fu lleihad o ran gwasanaethau lles addysg am fod rhai o'r trefniadau canolig yn cael eu datganoli i'r ysgolion, a'r ysgolion ddim yn gwario eu harian ar wasanaethau felly?

[224] **Ms Keane:** Byddwn yn parhau gyda'n hadroddiadau a'n harolygiadau awdurdodau lleol tan ddiwedd y flwyddyn galendr hon. Felly, byddwn yn adrodd ar y swyddogaethau, fel rydym wastad wedi ei wneud, ble bynnag fyddant, p'un ai yn y consortia neu yn yr awdurdod. Ond, yn y cyfamser, byddwn yn monitro'n ofalus yr hyn sy'n digwydd o ran y consortia ac yn adrodd mewn adroddiad annibynnol ar wahân ar waith y consortia o fewn y flwyddyn.

Aled Roberts: Is there a concern regarding this delay about how the consortia are working? You say that you are not going to inspect the consortia until September 2014, and your evidence in the annual report states that education welfare has not been a priority within school improvement services in the old local authorities. We have received evidence that the number of welfare officers is being reduced, and I share Jenny's concerns in that sense. Education welfare services will remain within local authorities while the consortia will be responsible for school improvement. Is there not a danger that co-operation will be worse under the new arrangements? In your evidence, you say that it has not been effective under the old regime either.

Ms Keane: There are risks attached to any change from one system to another. You are right to say that there is a risk that functions will be diffuse and that there will be a lack of co-ordination because of the shifting of functions. However, we will monitor carefully how that develops this year, so that we can report on any deficiencies, if any arise in the system.

Aled Roberts: Will your reports on local authorities also show whether there has been a reduction in education welfare services as a result of some of the central arrangements being devolved to schools, and the schools not spending their money on such services?

Ms Keane: We will continue to report on and inspect local authorities until the end of this calendar year. Therefore, we will report on the functions, as we have always done, wherever they may be, whether in the consortia or in the authority. In the meantime, we will carefully monitor what is happening in terms of the consortia and report in a separate independent report on the work of the consortia within this year.

[225] **Suzy Davies:** You mention in your report that all schools see themselves as community focused, but that that means different things to different people. Where do you think it is important that a school is community focused and how does that help attendance and behaviour?

[226] **Ms Keane:** That is key. The community-focused schools initiative was a good initiative in many respects. However, one of the big drawbacks for me was that it was not a universal initiative. It built on existing good practice and individual schools could apply for a grant to undertake certain activities and so on. When we did a report on it a few years ago, we found that community-focused schools were not in the right places. A lot of them were in the leafy suburbs and a lot of deprived areas had no community-focused schools. In England, it was a universal initiative; in Wales, it was not. It was down to the school to make applications for grants and so on. It is my belief that having a community-focused school in a deprived area is essential, if education is to be seen as something that is identified with the local area and something that belongs to the local area. It is significant that the school in Cefn Hengoed calls itself Cefn Hengoed Community School. The school sees it as part of its responsibility to take on board initiatives to link with the community in many different ways and to involve parents in the school's activities. There is no doubt in my mind that, in all the community-focused schools I have looked at, a huge difference is made by out-of-school-hours learning, links to the community, bringing parents into the school, and involving local people in a way that helps youngsters to identify themselves with the school. It is key. As I said earlier, it is not enough just to call yourself community focused and have a few things going on after school hours: it has to be planned; it has to be complementary to the curriculum; it has to be targeted; you have to bring in mentorship from other young people who mentor young people; and, you have to create a sense of community in the school that goes way outside school hours.

[227] **Suzy Davies:** Have you come across any schools that call themselves community-focused schools and are trying hard, but actually the community itself is not that keen on offering its support?

[228] **Ms Keane:** I will not pretend that it is easy. We know that schools struggle with hard-to-reach groups of parents and learners. However, there are examples—they are in the case studies—of schools that have managed that. So, if one school can manage it in one deprived community, why cannot others do the same?

[229] **Suzy Davies:** Good question.

11.30 a.m.

[230] **Simon Thomas:** Rydym eisoes wedi trafod ymyrraeth gynnar a pha mor bwysig yw hynny gyda theuluoedd. Un peth penodol yr ydych yn sôn amdano ynglŷn â gwella presenoldeb yw'r arfer da o gysylltu ar y diwrnod cyntaf. Rwyf wedi profi hynny fy hun—rwy'n datgan diddordeb yn hynny o beth. Mae hynny'n gweithio, mae'n debyg, ac mae'n arbennig o effeithiol. A oes unrhyw reswm, felly, pam nad yw pob ysgol gynradd bellach yn gwneud hynny fel mater o arfer? Mae'n debyg nad ydynt.

Simon Thomas: We have already discussed early intervention and how important it is with families. One specific thing that you mentioned about improving attendance is the good practice of a first-day response. I have experienced that myself—I declare an interest in that regard. That works, apparently, and it is very effective. Is there any reason, therefore, that not every primary school does that as a matter of course? Apparently, they do not.

[231] **Ms Keane:** Nid wyf yn gweld **Ms Keane:** I do not see any reason why they

unrhyw reswm pa na allant wneud.

could not that.

[232] **Simon Thomas:** A oes unrhyw beth yn dod yn ôl yn eich adroddiadau chi yn nodi pam? A yw'r ysgolion yn esbonio neu'n dweud eu bod yn methu â gwneud hynny am ryw reswm penodol?

Simon Thomas: Is there anything in your reports that notes why they are not doing that? Are schools explaining and telling you that they cannot do it for some specific reason?

[233] **Ms Keane:** Na, nid hyd y gwn i.

Ms Keane: No, not to my knowledge.

[234] **Mr Rowlands:** Os nad oes problem presenoldeb mewn ysgol benodol, efallai eu bod yn meddwl nad oes angen hynny.

Mr Rowlands: If there is no attendance problem in a specific school, perhaps they do not think that it is necessary to do that.

[235] **Simon Thomas:** Fodd bynnag, unwaith yr ydych yn dechrau'r arfer hwnnw, byddai'n rhwydd a byddai'n troi'n rhywbeth y byddech yn ei wneud yn awtomatig yn yr ysgol. O fewn wythnos, byddech yn ei wneud yn awtomatig.

Simon Thomas: However, once you put that practice in place, it would be easy and would become something that you did automatically in the school. Within a week, you would do it automatically.

[236] **Mr Rowlands:** Yn sicr, dylai ysgol sydd â phroblem presenoldeb wneud hynny. Ni allaf feddwl am unrhyw ysgol sydd wedi rhoi rhesymeg pam na fedr wneud hynny.

Mr Rowlands: Certainly, a school that has an attendance problem should do it. I cannot think of any school that has provided some rationale as to why it cannot do it.

[237] **Simon Thomas:** Mae gennych dystiolaeth bod hyn yn gweithio.

Simon Thomas: You have evidence that this works.

[238] **Ms Keane:** Oes, ond fel un elfen mewn arfogaeth.

Ms Keane: Yes, but only as one element in an armoury of tools.

[239] **Simon Thomas:** Rwy'n deall hynny, yng nghyd-destun y pethau rydym wedi bod yn eu trafod, ond mae'n rhywbeth penodol sy'n cael ei glustnodi fel arfer da.

Simon Thomas: I understand that, in the context of what we have been discussing, but this is a specific thing that is recognised as good practice.

[240] **Ms Keane:** Ydy, mae'n nodwedd sy'n codi drosodd a throsodd mewn ysgolion lle maen nhw'n effeithiol.

Ms Keane: Yes, it is a characteristic that comes up time and again in schools that are effective.

[241] **Mr Rowlands:** Mae rhoi gwobrwyon ac yn y blaen i bobl sydd â phresenoldeb da yn fwy effeithiol. Mae dwy ochr i'r hafaliad, fel petai.

Mr Rowlands: Giving awards and so on to people who have good attendance is more effective. There are two sides to the equation, so to speak.

[242] **Simon Thomas:** Rwy'n gwybod bod eich adroddiad blaenorol yn nodi'n glir bod gwobrwyon yn helpu yn y broses honno. Nid oes amser gennym i drafod cosbi, felly gadawn ni hynny am y tro.

Simon Thomas: I know that your previous report notes clearly that awards help in that process. There is no time to discuss punishment, so we will leave that for now.

[243] **Christine Chapman:** Time is against us now, so I will have to draw this session to a close. Thank you all for attending today. I know that there were other questions that Members wanted to ask, but we need to draw this session to a close. If you are willing, I will send those

questions to you so that you can reply in writing.

[244] **Ms Keane:** Yes, by all means.

[245] **Christine Chapman:** We will also send you a transcript of the meeting so that you can check it for factual accuracy. Thank you again for attending today.

11.33 a.m.

Ymchwiliad i Bresenoldeb ac Ymddygiad—Sesiwn Dystiolaeth Inquiry into Attendance and Behaviour—Evidence Session

[246] **Christine Chapman:** We will now continue with the inquiry into attendance and behaviour. I welcome Caroline Rawson, the assistant director of SNAP Cymru. You have sent us a paper in advance. Committee members will have read the paper, so if you are happy to do so, we will go straight into questions.

[247] **Ms Rawson:** That is fine.

[248] **Christine Chapman:** I will start. What proportion of the casework that you deal with includes problems relating to attendance and behaviour?

[249] **Ms Rawson:** I would say that it is about 30%. It may be a bit higher. It depends on which particular county we are working in. It is certainly higher in some counties than others. I would be happy to provide that information for you.

[250] **Christine Chapman:** If you could, that would be useful. I will now pass on to Aled Roberts.

[251] **Aled Roberts:** A yw hi'n bosibl ichi roi dadansoddiad inni o'r achosion yr ydych yn sôn amdanynt? Rydych yn sôn am 695 o achosion lle mae perygl o waharddiadau. A yw hwnnw'n batrwm sy'n gryfach mewn ysgolion cynradd neu ysgolion uwchradd? A oes patrwm bod hon yn broblem fwy mewn ardaloedd o amddifadedd?

Aled Roberts: Is it possible for you to provide us with a breakdown of the cases that you talk about? You mention 695 cases where there is a risk of exclusion. Is that a pattern that is stronger in primary schools or secondary schools? Is there a pattern that this is more of a problem in areas of deprivation?

[252] **Ms Rawson:** I can provide that information for you, so that you will have the proper statistics from our records, and that would be fine. However, it is quite balanced. We get a lot of exclusions from both primary and secondary schools, more so with children with additional learning needs from primary school than from secondary school, but the pattern is fairly even.

[253] **Aled Roberts:** Symudaf ymlaen at y 160 o achosion lle bu i chi sôn bod perygl mawr. Sut mae'r cysylltiad gyda'ch mudiad chi'n dechrau yn y lle cyntaf, o ran y plant hyn? Ydy'r awdurdod neu'r ysgolion yn eu cyfeirio atoch chi? Sut yn union ydych chi'n mynd ati ar ôl hynny i weithio gyda nhw i ddod dros y problemau y maen nhw'n eu hwynebu?

Aled Roberts: I will move on to the 160 cases where you say that there is a big risk. How does the link with your organisation start in terms of these children? Does the authority or the school refer them to you? How exactly do you start to work with them to overcome the problems that they face?

[254] **Ms Rawson:** We like to think that all schools would contact SNAP Cymru, but, in

fact, they do not. It is entirely up to them; they do not have to contact us. Families are often advised by schools to contact SNAP Cymru at the beginning of an issue, and we hope that that happens in all schools. The reality is a little patchy. We tend to have better relations with some schools than others to be honest. However, where we can get in nice and early, we can make an awful lot of difference. So, parents are encouraged to contact us by schools and local authorities, and we are working at the moment to place community information points in schools throughout Wales, and there is good contact information about what to do if your child has been excluded or is at risk of exclusion. That way, they contact us and they can get early advice and support, and that is what we would always recommend. If there is an early intervention strategy, very often, these exclusions can be turned around successfully.

[255] **Simon Thomas:** On pupils who are undiagnosed, I have lots of constituency cases where there have been long periods of waiting for diagnosis for autistic spectrum disorders, for example. There is a danger that they will be excluded. They do not have a diagnosed special need, but that may well emerge in the future. Do you deal with pupils such as those, or families in that situation? Do you have any evidence of the dangers of exclusion within that group?

[256] **Ms Rawson:** The evidence is that they are at very high risk. Mainly, it is because they have not been diagnosed, they are waiting for a diagnosis or there has been limited additional support placed in the school for them. Those children are at risk and those are the ones who you describe. They are easily targeted because often parents are so grateful that the school has accepted them in the beginning that it seems easier, in some respects, for some schools to exclude them early on. Once they have received a diagnosis or the additional support that they need, it drops off, but we still have instances where even schools that have special units dealing with a particular disability exclude children from those units. That does not happen very often, but it does occur.

[257] **Rebecca Evans:** Following on from that, regarding pupils with additional learning needs, five of the six cases of exclusion in your evidence involve children with additional learning needs. In your experience, do children with ALN disproportionately make up your casework?

[258] **Ms Rawson:** SNAP Cymru's primary purpose is to work with children and families who have, or may have, additional needs. So, yes, but we also work with those who have been excluded from school who were maybe outside a diagnosis of additional learning needs.

[259] **Rebecca Evans:** Are there particular conditions that come up time and again? Simon has mentioned autism, but how about things such as hearing impairment and ADHD? Do those conditions arise?

[260] **Ms Rawson:** It is usually the ones with more challenging behaviour, so it is those with autistic spectrum disorders, ADHD and the like. Some have emotional behavioural problems as well. Those children can be disruptive, and they are more difficult to deal with. So, often, it is more of these than any other types of less challenging behaviours.

[261] **Rebecca Evans:** What more could the Welsh Government and local authorities do to support children with additional learning needs, so that they do not reach a point where they are facing exclusion from school?

[262] **Ms Rawson:** I have a long list, because I did not want to be really negative and come here to bash schools. We do not want to do that. I would like to put forward some things that I have been thinking about today. A lot of it is around support for schools, because when it comes to excluding children and young people, they are often challenged or they do not do it properly. So, schools need a lot of support in certain areas, such as on how to draw up

pastoral support plans, which, if worked out properly, help avoid school exclusion. I think that some schools—I do not want to say all schools, because that is not true—use it as a tick-box exercise: ‘Yes, we’ve drawn up a PSP; here it is’, and it bears little reflection to the child they are meant to be working with. They could really do with some help with training around that, so that they really understand what it means and bring about whole-school involvement with the PSP.

[263] We talked earlier about community schools, which are fantastic, because the ethos of the community becomes part of the school, and everybody within the school works to help the child or young person who is at risk of exclusion. Unfortunately, that does not always happen. We always say that schools are very busy places and that, sometimes, not all of those things can be put in place, but there does need to be some encouragement for schools. They also need somebody to contact for help. I am sure that they have those contacts, but it seems to me that they go down the route of fixed-term or even permanent exclusions without getting an awful lot of help or support from the local authority. Children are often permanently excluded without the local authority knowing anything about them, and that causes a huge amount of problems for everybody, as you can imagine. So, that is another thing that we think should happen.

[264] When a young person is excluded for a fixed term or, indeed, permanently, a pupil disciplinary committee meeting is held to discuss that exclusion. The governors meet with the headteacher and the family to look at the exclusion, to see whether it is right and proper and should continue. Actually, schools do not really know how to run PDCs and governors need training on the whole issue of excluding children. That does not happen. So, schools need help with that as well. It is not expensive training—it is about getting governors together. An organisation like SNAP Cymru could put on training for governors.

[265] **Christine Chapman:** These are very good ideas and clearly, schools are doing them, but is there sometimes a resistance to take on board the training?

[266] **Ms Rawson:** There may be, but much of the problem is that school governors are volunteers, doing it in their own time and probably work full-time. So, it is an issue of fitting some of these things in. They read guidance, but they need practical training. I know that some local authorities arrange training but the issue is more about encouraging governors to attend, although I have recently spoken to governors who have not been offered any training. They come into a formal situation of having to deal with the exclusion of a child or young person but they do not know whether the whole process is fair, because they do not really understand it. That is a problem.

[267] **Aled Roberts:** I want to ask about the February 2012 figures from the Welsh Government, which indicated that 50% of all exclusions were of pupils with additional learning needs. The figures are increasing for pupils with additional learning needs. Is that due to the increase in the incidence of diagnosed additional learning needs, or do you think that a different attitude has been adopted by school leaders and governing bodies as far as exclusion is concerned?

11.45 a.m.

[268] **Ms Rawson:** We would like to hope. I cannot say that we have any evidence to say that there is a change in attitude. I think that part of the problem might be limited resources. I hate to bring that up all of the time, but, very often, schools feel that they do not have enough money to put in the additional time and support that is required for a challenging young person that is at risk. That is an issue.

[269] **Jenny Rathbone:** You talk about 92 cases of illegal exclusions, and those are just the

ones that have managed to make their way to you. So many families will be involved in these pupil disciplinary hearings without being represented at all, or know their rights, and perhaps governors will not know what the regulations say, that it is a pretty devastating picture. That is just based on the 92 cases—the selection of cases that you have given. What could be done to improve this?

[270] **Ms Rawson:** We would like for all families that have a challenging young person at risk of exclusion to be told about how to get help, whether that is through SNAP Cymru, the local authority or whatever. In that way, they can help themselves to understand the process and work better with the school to avoid the exclusion or to plan something else. When we talk about unlawful exclusions, it is only the tip of the iceberg. Within the exclusion figures, we do not count managed moves, for example, as exclusions, but there is a huge amount of managed moves. We do not have the statistics for managed moves, because, very often, the families do not get to us. We are very small in terms of the percentage of families that access our services, but we know that there is a huge amount of managed moves going on, which massage the figures slightly. I think that it is worse than the figures currently show.

[271] When it comes to training for parents or schools, very often no-one has any idea. When a child is excluded from a school, families do not know whether they should receive a letter, whether there should be a meeting to discuss it, or who to contact. Very often, there is a lack of communication with the school; they do not know whether their child should have work set for them or not. They do not know anything. You were talking earlier about European funding; we are part of Reach the Heights project, working with children at risk or those who have been excluded from school. That project has allowed us to put in some fantastic developments, such as community information points, so that parents can see a number to call straight away. There is also a smartphone app and a website for young people, discussing exclusion and how to get help. There is also a website with lots of information for families, which they often cannot get. When it is happening to them, they do not understand. All that they know is that their child can no longer go to the school. They do not know what to do next or where to turn for help. That is a problem.

[272] **Jenny Rathbone:** Estyn reports that there has been an improved focus on attendance in secondary schools since it was included as part of the banding assessments. Is there anything further that the Welsh Government could be doing to improve the care and attention given to young people who are out of school?

[273] **Ms Rawson:** If they have been permanently excluded, the most important thing is to try to get them back in. The evidence that we have from the casework that we are doing is that it can take a year or so to get some people back into school, by which time they are really disaffected and the chances of them reaching their full potential are very much reduced. That is one thing that needs to happen. Somehow, we need to get them back into school early. Also, if schools are excluding some young people—and some of it is legitimate—they should be happy to accept children who have been excluded from other places. Very often, it is a one-way street—they will exclude out, but they will not accept in. We have picked that up as a problem. Local authorities have huge difficulties, sometimes, in finding a school that will accept an excluded pupil, and it is a real problem. When they are excluded, they are entitled to 25 hours of education a week, but it does not happen. Most of the time, they receive five hours a week if they are lucky. So, there are all sorts of things going on—family dynamics change, because family members can no longer go to work if they have a child who is permanently excluded from school—that cause huge disruption, as you can imagine. There is a lot to do, but getting excluded children back in to school as soon as possible is quite a big one for us.

[274] **Jenny Rathbone:** So, why are no local authorities in Wales, as far as I am aware, doing a system of one in, one out, whereby if they exclude somebody, they are expected to

take in another child who has been excluded from somewhere else?

[275] **Ms Rawson:** Local authorities try to do that, but, unfortunately, it does not always happen that way, and schools will come up with various excuses, including being full to bursting, as reasons for not accepting children. Other schools, however, are fantastic at accepting children and put in really good plans that work. It is patchy.

[276] **Jenny Rathbone:** So what are we going to do to ensure that all schools make this a core part of their obligations and commitments to children?

[277] **Ms Rawson:** When you have schools in clusters, they should be willing. I can give you an example of what is happening in Bridgend, because I have worked closely with that authority recently. Where it has a child at risk, special educational needs co-ordinators and other leaders get together in groups to discuss and perhaps plan a way forward and to draw up a PSP. They work together to do that in order to avoid exclusion. There is more willingness in those clusters, if a child is excluded from one school, to find a place in another school in the cluster. That is a good thing, but it is not happening everywhere. Bridgend has made a good move there.

[278] In addition, when we look at exclusion from school, we hear time and again from school staff, ‘Oh, we knew that that one was going to be a problem from when he was four.’ It is about early intervention and getting in there nice and early to help the family, using a whole-family approach and working to turn the whole family around, to get the child attending school properly and to get behaviour under control. There is good news there, because some Families First projects have early intervention projects. SNAP Cymru is involved in a project in Ynys Môn, and we have just received some Families First money for an exclusions project in Cardiff. That kind of additional intervention from the Families First projects will make a lot of difference.

[279] **Bethan Jenkins:** Do you think that local authorities are fully aware of the fact that they are illegally excluding students? I am asking because NASUWT representatives seemed to suggest that it was not something that was prevalent; they did not understand the concept—they needed me to explain what it meant. What is your understanding of local authorities’ acknowledgement of that? You have put in a series of recommendations about exclusions, which is very noble, but, in some areas, such as Neath Port Talbot, there is no appeals process for complaints. Do we need to look to local authorities to streamline their processes, so that children feel that they have an equal standing, wherever they receive education?

[280] **Ms Rawson:** The second part is easy: ‘yes’. I think that you would expect me to say that. Can you repeat the first part of the question?

[281] **Bethan Jenkins:** Do local authorities acknowledge that this is a problem—

[282] **Ms Rawson:** Do you mean unlawful exclusions?

[283] **Bethan Jenkins:** Yes.

[284] **Ms Rawson:** I was told off today; I should have written ‘unlawful’ rather than ‘illegal’ in my paper. They do not know about them, because nobody tells them about them, because they are not official. I gave a couple of examples in there. If you have a little boy—let us say he is six years old—with challenging behaviour, and the school has allocated, say, 10 hours a week of support for him, he can only really be in school while the support is there, for those 10 hours. Parents are encouraged to take their child out for the remaining time, and that is unlawful exclusion. The family may not look on it as being unlawful. It might be grateful that the little boy can be in school for 10 hours a week because of the difficulties that

he has. Families do not always understand their rights, and they do not always want a challenge anyway. We can really understand that. In my own case, I have a son with Asperger's syndrome, and he sort of managed through mainstream education. When he was in the last year of primary school it was being inspected, and I was asked whether I could take him out of school during that time and perhaps take him on an early holiday. That is an illegal or unlawful exclusion.

[285] **Christine Chapman:** Is that quite frequent?

[286] **Ms Rawson:** It happens a lot. It does happen, and very often, as parents with children who may have more challenging behaviour, we are just so glad that they are managing to keep them in school, but if they say, 'Can you take him out for a week?', then the answer is, 'No problem; yes, of course'. It happens quite a lot.

[287] **Bethan Jenkins:** Just to clarify, you are explaining to us what you would deem to be unlawful. Are you saying that the local authority is not recognising it because it is not in the data, or that it is totally unaware of what unlawful exclusion is, or that it is ignoring the problem?

[288] **Ms Rawson:** All of it. Local authorities do not really understand what the problem is. They are not told about it because it is not official. Very often parents do not complain about this. They may get to a point where somebody says, 'Actually, it's wrong. Your child is entitled to full-time education just the same as my child is. Why do you not talk to SNAP Cymru'—for example—'or have a look on the website or something?'. Then they start to realise that, no, it is not right.

[289] **Aled Roberts:** I guess of the two examples that you have given us, in the first one with 10 hours of support per week, provided the 10 hours was two hours per day, the pupil could always be marked as present. Where you were encouraged to take your son out prior to the inspection, it was authorised absence.

[290] **Ms Rawson:** Absolutely. Of course, it does not show up on any figures. Schools themselves—

[291] **Simon Thomas:** It does show up in the figures, but unfortunately it is seen as a positive thing rather than a negative thing, which is what it should be.

[292] **Ms Rawson:** Yes, exactly; that is what I meant to say. Schools do not always realise that it is unlawful, either, because they feel that they are trying their best to manage a difficult situation, and very often they are. This is not about bashing schools because of it. What they would say is that they are not getting enough resources to keep the child in the school on a full-time basis.

[293] **Christine Chapman:** Suzy, did you want to come in on this?

[294] **Suzy Davies:** I probably know the answer to this, but when you have these unlawful exclusions, I suspect that it primarily affects children with additional learning needs, does it not?

[295] **Ms Rawson:** Yes, it nearly always does. If there is a change-in-behaviour situation, they nearly always have some kind of additional learning need.

[296] **Suzy Davies:** I do not think that I need to expand on that, thanks, Chair.

[297] **Simon Thomas:** We have already touched on this, but it is about what sort of

strategies can be put in place before formal legal interventions, and what is the best practice by schools and local authorities. You talked earlier a little bit about Families First in Anglesey, for example, and that sort of thing. Do you have any examples of strategies where really good things happen before we get to any legal position?

[298] **Ms Rawson:** Within our own casework, what we have found is that, where we can get to families and schools we can build a partnership, because very often the communication is broken down when a child is excluded or at risk of exclusion. There may have been various meetings and interventions tried, and parents can get very upset and cross about it. So, the idea of partnership working in building relationships is very important.

12.00 p.m.

[299] When you talked about community schools, I just thought 'yes'. In community schools where there is much more nurturing going on, that really works. For us, however, if we can build partnerships with families and schools, we can have a really good two-way conversation going on—schools are able to work with families much more, and it seems that they are much more able to keep a child at risk in school.

[300] I think that schools do need to ask for help. If they are struggling, they need to ask for help. We wish that they would come to us, because we would help them. You know, we will help them to get the partnerships going, put some training in for the governors, and look at pastoral support programmes with them, but they do not always come to us.

[301] **Simon Thomas:** Is there a need for you or others to be some kind of advocates or mediators in that process? You mentioned relationships and being able to build them up; it may well be that the parents themselves have reached a situation where they are not behaving very well towards the school, or the school may not be behaving very well towards them. Are there things, even at that stage, that can still be done? Are there good examples of how that can happen?

[302] **Ms Rawson:** Yes, and that is what we do on a daily basis. We work with families and schools together, to stop the situation escalating into exclusion or poor attendance. We have worked successfully with Reach the Heights, with over 1,600 young people who were excluded permanently or for a fixed term, or were at risk of exclusion, and we got them back in, or into some kind of training or other education, or, indeed, into the workplace. So, it does work. If you can get in there nice and early and can build a working relationship with the family and with the school, then it really does make all the difference.

[303] **Simon Thomas:** I want to go back to an earlier point, which was about managed moves. In that context, are there examples of where managed moves are agreed—and properly so, with the parents empowered to agree them with the school—and they have worked? You know, management should be part of a successful intervention.

[304] **Ms Rawson:** It depends on the ethos of the school, of course, because it will know that it is to receive a child or young person who may have quite significant difficulties. So, provided that it—

[305] **Simon Thomas:** But the school that the person is going to might be better equipped.

[306] **Ms Rawson:** Yes. Provided that it builds the relationship with the family and put a really good plan in that might involve additional resources or help from local authority resources, then you can have some really successful outcomes.

[307] **Lynne Neagle:** You say in your evidence that much more needs to be achieved to

ensure the full participation of children and young people in the planning and decision making that affects them. Could you say a little bit about how that relates to planning and decision making in relation to behaviour and attendance?

[308] **Ms Rawson:** If we think about exclusions, the child or young person who is affected by exclusion is very often not consulted or spoken to at all about what has happened. Even taking that as the lowest common denominator, they are not involved in those decisions that affect them. If you are going to be excluded permanently from school, it is a major decision that is being made on your behalf, and you have very little part in it.

[309] With attendance, I always remember one local authority official saying to me, ‘Well, the thing is, you see, Caroline, these young people, they vote with their feet’, and he was quite right, really. If they felt that they were not getting anything from a school, they were not going. I am not saying that that is right, but how many of us enjoyed going to school every single day? I know that I did not, and I would be the first to say so, but I did go, thank goodness.

[310] I think that we really need to work with them and talk to them, in groups, individually, with other young people and on their own, to do advocacy work with them and to find out from them what their problems really are. What you will find, I am sure, is what we find when we do that—and we do it a lot—namely that they have some underlying problem, whether it be specific learning difficulties, such as undiagnosed dyslexia, or more significant learning difficulties. They nearly always have a problem. There are not many that opt out for no reason.

[311] **Lynne Neagle:** Is there anything that you think should be done at a Welsh Government level to improve learner participation in those kinds of decisions?

[312] **Ms Rawson:** It is happening more now. School councils, circle time and community activities within schools help to bring children in. We know in some schools that children and young people are sometimes on interview panels, for example. All of that helps the voice of the child to be in the centre. It is happening within pilot and non-pilot areas. Person-centred planning reviews, which really bring the child and young person in at an early stage into the heart of any decision making, makes such a difference. Schools could do that in bringing children in more with putting together plans. In my experience, my son was involved in planning, but he sat over there somewhere; he did not really know what was going on and he just agreed to anything that we were saying. That is not really what we want; we want to be much more person centred, and it is happening. Where it is happening, the outcome is really good.

[313] **Christine Chapman:** Bethan, did you want to come back in with a supplementary question?

[314] **Bethan Jenkins:** I appreciate that it is important for young people to be consulted, but I just want to play devil’s advocate in the sense that, in some instances, it may be argued that the child has too much power and that they become manipulative of the situation, especially if they perhaps have influential parents or if their parents are on the governing body. They may be treated in a different way to other children, or may be given special treatment because they have a problem, for example creating a special area of the classroom that other children may want to go to instead of having lessons with other children. How do you balance taking the view of the child as key, because they are being affected, with recognising where their voice sits in the wider scheme of the decision-making process?

[315] **Ms Rawson:** As long as we are taking their views into account, it does not mean to say that we have to give them everything that they are asking for, does it? That would be a

real danger. When you are looking at a person-centred way of working, it is about considering wants, wishes and needs. Generally, children and young people just want to be like their mates, and they do not want to be different—they do not want anything additional. Although there is a danger there, provided that there is a balanced approach to how it is done, I do not think that that should cause too many problems. I hear what you are saying, definitely. We have to be careful about how much power they can hold.

[316] **Bethan Jenkins:** It is just that you hear of instances where the parents would defend the child without question. They would not say, ‘Actually, my Johnny has been bad’; they will say, ‘No, my Johnny is always good’, so they will not take on board any of the preliminary discussion with regard to behavioural problems. Perhaps SNAP would need to come in earlier when the parents are causing more of a problem than helping the situation. That is what I am trying to get at.

[317] **Ms Rawson:** One thing that we always do is to look at the reality of any situation. We are not saying in here that some children and young people should not be excluded from school, because they sometimes should be excluded. Rights, realities, roles and responsibilities—I know that they are buzz words, but they are really important ones. If we have parents who are defending little Johnny to the hilt when he is a pretty bad boy, and if there needs to be some work from the family and with the school, then we would certainly help them to understand what the reality of the situation is, if I can put it that way.

[318] **Suzy Davies:** I have a couple of questions on legal advice. When you have aggrieved parents, perhaps in the situation that you talked about with Bethan, and they have discovered that you exist and they come to you, is their first instinct to say, ‘I want a lawyer’, or are they open to listening to you about alternative ways of dealing with the situation? How many of your requests for legal help are not actually requests for legal help, just for help?

[319] **Ms Rawson:** Mostly, it is for help. Sometimes they will say, ‘I’m going to go to a solicitor, but we thought we’d talk to you first’. That happens quite a lot.

[320] **Suzy Davies:** Does that mean fewer go to a solicitor because they are happy with what you told them?

[321] **Ms Rawson:** Yes, it does, because most of it is resolvable through mediation through our parent partnership services; informal mediation is what we do all day. It can be formal mediation, but, very often, you can just say, ‘Well, hang on, let’s step back three paces and talk about this’ and an awful lot can be resolved that way. What tends to happen is that, if a family goes straight to a solicitor, then the local authorities will pull the shutters down because they come within a legal arena and it is much more difficult to resolve.

[322] **Suzy Davies:** Are you finding that solicitors who are consulted in those circumstances are savvy enough to recognise that this particular family needs to go to SNAP rather than to law? Have you had it the other way around, where people have been to the solicitor first and end up being referred to you?

[323] **Ms Rawson:** We would like to think that might happen; I do not think we have any evidence to show that it does. I am not saying that it does not happen; it may very well happen, but—

[324] **Suzy Davies:** It has not been explained to you that somebody has come to you through that route, however, has it?

[325] **Ms Rawson:** I would like to think that solicitors, if they know that the family could not possibly afford their services, would point the family in our direction.

[326] **Suzy Davies:** It is more than a question of affordability. It is about the best route to help the family because law is not always the best route, and I say that with a slightly unvested interest for once. [*Laughter.*]

[327] **Christine Chapman:** We have a few lawyers sitting around the table.

[328] **Ms Rawson:** If a family instructs a solicitor, there are a couple of things we can do. We can encourage the family to put that on hold to let us try to resolve it, or we can say, ‘Oh, you’ve consulted a solicitor; we will back off’. We are in a situation where we work face-to-face with 2,500 families, on a casework basis, and with many thousands more through other means. However, we are so limited in resources and people that our attitude towards it is that, if you have instructed lawyers and are going down that route, we will give you information, but we cannot really help that much. However, if we are in there early enough, we can say, ‘We advise you to put that on hold and let’s see what we can do before the letters start flying about’, because that, invariably, is what happens.

[329] **Suzy Davies:** That is quite encouraging. I noticed in your evidence that you were concerned about the potential effects of changes to legal aid. Even though children with special needs will not lose out as a result of the potential changes, do you think that perhaps too many families are going to law rather than to you? I am trying to work out how seriously the legal aid changes will affect families in reality.

[330] **Ms Rawson:** Families will go to law in exclusion cases—if they feel that the permanent exclusion is wrong, and they are taking it to independent appeal, it is not unusual for families then to seek legal support. That can be quite expensive, but, if they feel they have a very good case, very often they will feel that, because it is a stage higher, they will need more support at that level.

[331] **Suzy Davies:** I do not want to take up too much time, Chair, but I have a further question. You mentioned in earlier evidence that, in your experience, the majority of children who are excluded tend to have additional learning needs of some sort. I just wanted to ask you why—

[332] **Ms Rawson:** Those families do not generally go to seek legal advice; they just want their children back in school and they want help. If you talk to families and they say that they have to get a solicitor, when you explain what might happen and that it could very possibly prolong everything, which, unfortunately, it can, and almost always does, families will then say, ‘Okay, we just want to get them back in’, or, ‘We just want to find a different school’ or, ‘We just want to get additional education from somewhere else for the time being’ and ask, ‘What can we do?’ Families, especially those with children with additional needs, have enough on their plates and they do not generally go to seek legal support unless they feel it is absolutely necessary.

[333] **Suzy Davies:** So, logically, it is not a huge majority that end up going to court.

[334] **Ms Rawson:** Not with additional needs, no.

[335] **Christine Chapman:** Thank you. I have to draw this session to a close. Thank you, Caroline, for your attendance. It has been a very interesting session. We will send you a transcript of the meeting so that you can check it for factual accuracy, so thank you once again for attending.

[336] **Ms Rawson:** I will send those statistics.

[337] **Christine Chapman:** That would be really helpful.

[338] **Ms Rawson:** They are based on our own case records, so it is only with the families that we deal with, but it makes interesting reading and I will send that over to you.

[339] **Christine Chapman:** That would be great; thank you very much.

12.15 p.m.

**Cynnig o dan Reol Sefydlog Rhif 17.42 i Benderfynu Gwahardd y Cyhoedd o'r
Cyfarfod
Motion under Standing Order No. 17.42 to Resolve to Exclude the Public from
the Meeting**

[340] **Christine Chapman:** I move that

the committee resolves to exclude the public from the remainder of the meeting in accordance with Standing Order No. 17.42(vi).

[341] Are you all content? I see that you are.

*Derbyniwyd y cynnig.
Motion agreed.*

*Daeth rhan gyhoeddus y cyfarfod i ben am 12.15 p.m.
The public part of the meeting ended at 12.15 p.m.*