

EDUCATION AND LIFELONG LEARNING COMMITTEE

SCHOOL OF THE FUTURE

INTERIM REPORT

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CHAIR'S FOREWORD

In October 2002, the Committee started this policy review by looking ahead some 15 years to the school of the future. The Committee identified major issues, which it wished to explore - complementing the strategy set out by the Welsh Assembly Government in *The Learning Country*.

This is an interim report and I hope that it will stimulate further exploration of this exciting subject. The Committee does not advocate rapid changes across the sector but we have identified areas where we feel there should be significant transformation in teaching and learning over the next 15 years. We consider that the school of the future should be at the heart of its local community - providing excellent teaching and learning relevant to local needs.

We received evidence from a wide range of organisations and individuals in the field of education and training. I was heartened to find so much enthusiasm for this review and this was reflected in the quality of the contributions. On behalf of the Committee, I wish to thank all those who took the time to submit their thoughts and ideas, both written and oral, but a special thanks to those pupils who shared their views in person and via their school councils.

I should like to express my gratitude to the external reference group, which provided valuable advice and acted as a sounding board, particularly in developing the programme of work and commenting on the draft report. The content of the report is nonetheless the sole responsibility of the Committee. I also acknowledge assistance provided by the Assembly Minister's officials.

I should like to thank Committee Members for their hard work and also the Committee Secretariat for managing the review and writing this report.

On behalf of the Committee, I commend this report to the Assembly Minister and the Welsh Assembly Government. I hope that following the forthcoming National Assembly election, the appropriate committee will carry forward this work so that the school of the future will be shaped by the ideas set out in this report.

CHAPTER ONE - INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Welsh Assembly Government's strategy for education and lifelong learning to the year 2010 was set out in *The Learning Country*¹, published in summer 2001. The Committee carried out this policy review in order to look further ahead to the middle of the next decade.

1.2 Our purpose was to produce a vision of the school of the future. We were concerned not so much with imagining a futuristic building but rather the ethos and function of schools in the future. We wished to inspire policy makers to concentrate on those areas we consider to be of particular importance.

1.3 Our method was to invite stakeholders - including learners, teachers and governors - to indulge in 'blue skies' thinking unhindered by current physical or financial constraints.

1.4 The Terms of Reference for the review are set out in Annex 1.

1.5 The Committee is grateful to members of the external reference group, who provided advice and guidance during the course of the review. A schedule of members of the group is at Annex 2.

1.6 The Committee started hearing evidence in October 2002 and finished in February 2003. A written consultation exercise was carried out during summer 2002. We have consulted widely in the field of education in Wales and the Committee is grateful to all those who have contributed to this review by sharing their ideas with us. A schedule of those consulted and their responses can be found on the Committee's website at www.wales.gov.uk

1.7 A schedule of papers presented to the Committee is at Annex 3.

1.8 The Committee was particularly keen to hear the views of learners. We are grateful to those schools and their pupils who have discussed this topic at their school councils and who have shared their ideas with us. We are particularly grateful to two schools who presented evidence directly to the Committee: St Cenydd Comprehensive, in Caerphilly, and Ysgol Bro Morgannwg, in the Vale of Glamorgan. Thanks also to pupils at Ysgol y Wern, Cardiff, who designed and built their model school of the future.

1.9 This is an interim report, a catalyst for further work by the appropriate committee, following the forthcoming election. We believe that there will be a significant transformation in the quality, content and delivery of teaching and learning in the school of the future. There will be significant changes in the design and operation of school buildings, with a greater focus on use by and for the community. This process of change must be managed effectively to avoid disruption and to ensure a progressive evolution from the present to the future.

¹ www.learning.wales.gov.uk

CHAPTER TWO - OUR VISION

Community Focus

2.1 The school of the future will provide high quality and inspirational teaching and learning. Social inclusion, sustainable development, equal opportunities and bilingualism will be incorporated into all aspects of school life. The school will be at the heart of its local community and will encourage all members of the community to participate in lifelong learning.

Tackling Social Disadvantage

2.2 The school, and the education service as a whole, will be central to tackling social disadvantage. In particular, the school will focus efforts on improving the low attainment of groups facing particular disadvantage, and reducing the concentration of disadvantage in certain schools.

Inclusion and Participation

2.3 The school will ensure that learners of all abilities will be successful. Particular attention will be given to the needs of pupils with special educational needs (SEN) and pupils in danger of disaffection. All learners will be respected and enabled to contribute to decision making. This will prepare them to participate in society as active citizens, rather than as passive receptors of knowledge. There will be an ethos of lifelong and family learning, with parents and other adults developing their skills and also helping younger learners.

Curriculum and Parity of Esteem

2.4 The school will promote excellence in teaching and learning. It will provide a broad and stimulating curriculum. The school will contribute to the development of a bilingual Wales by providing excellent teaching and learning through the medium of Welsh in a wide range of subjects, for all age groups and in all areas. There will be parity of esteem between academic and vocational qualifications and a choice of pathways to learning.

Enjoyable Learning

2.5 The school of the future will allow learners to develop at their own pace and will recognise their achievements. Attainment targets and methods of assessment will be designed to improve the learning experience rather than to divide pupils into successes and failures. Learning will be an enjoyable experience and learners will want to pursue their studies beyond the classroom and outside normal school hours. The school buildings and facilities will be well designed, constructed and maintained and will complement existing community facilities. They will be exemplars of sustainable development and energy efficiency and will be open throughout the year. The school of the future will be an exciting and invigorating place for teaching, learning, playing and growing up.

CHAPTER THREE - THE PRESENT

FACTS AND FIGURES

Overview

3.1 These statistics are set out in *Schools in Wales: General Statistics 2002*². Unless otherwise stated, figures given for pupils and teachers are full-time equivalents in Wales.

3.2 At January 2002 there were some 27,500 teachers teaching just over 500,000 pupils in just under 2,000 schools. The number of pupils is projected to fall to some 449,000 by 2015, levelling out at around 460,000 from 2026.

Early Years Provision

3.3 There were 40 nursery schools. All four-year-olds had access to a full-time place in a maintained nursery or primary school. Just over 79% of pupils under five years old were in education (55,635 pupils in total). Some 75% were in primary schools, 3% in nursery schools, 1% in independent schools and about 0.5% in special schools.

Primary Schools

3.4 There were 1,624 primary schools. Welsh was the sole or main medium of instruction in 442 of these schools. The average class size was 24.4. There were 271,364 pupils and 12,904 teachers.

Secondary Schools

3.5 There were 227 secondary schools. Of these, 53 were Welsh-medium schools. The average class size was 21.2. There were 212,024 pupils and 12,955 teachers.

Special Schools

3.6 There were 44 maintained special schools. There were 3,727 pupils and 555 teachers.

Independent Schools

3.7 In independent schools there were 9,467 pupils and 976 teachers.

PRINCIPLES

Early Years

3.8 The Committee published a report *Laying the Foundation: Early Years Provision for Three Year Olds*³ some two years ago and the key recommendations were accepted and are being implemented by the Welsh Assembly Government. This included setting up an Early Years Advisory Panel to help shape policy in this area. Every local education authority (LEA) has established an Integrated Early Years Centre, with funding from the National Assembly.

Collaboration

3.9 The National Assembly has supported LEAs in developing effective local, non-selective, comprehensive schools. In general, education and training policies in Wales seek to strike a healthy balance between ensuring that schools have the capacity to make the most of their independence, whilst promoting collaboration and avoiding unnecessary competition.

Distinctive Approach for Wales

3.10 The Welsh Assembly Government, broadly supported by the Committee, has sought to develop policies to reflect the distinctive needs and circumstances of Wales and not merely to adopt policies applied in England. For example, there are no 'specialist' schools in Wales. Also, literacy and numeracy hours were not imposed on primary schools in Wales but rather they were given freedom to develop their own literacy and numeracy strategies, with support from the National Assembly. Last year the statutory requirement to carry out tasks and tests at key stage 1 was removed and secondary school league tables were abolished.

Education Act 2002

3.11 The Education Act 2002 contains a number of provisions, which will allow these distinctive education and training policies to be developed further. These include:

- Separate statutory basis for the national curriculum in Wales, which will facilitate development of the foundation stage and change at key stage 4;
- Powers to secure regional provision for pupils with low incidence special educational needs;
- Establishment of a separate Special Educational Needs Tribunal for Wales;
- Requiring LEAs to enter into partnership agreements with their schools;
- Facilitating pupil transition from primary school to secondary school by requiring secondary schools and their feeder primary schools to plan for transition;
- Establishing school budget forums in each LEA;
- Giving governing bodies powers to provide services for their local communities.

Curriculum and Assessment

3.12 There is a national curriculum in Wales, which is reviewed every five years by ACCAC (the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority in Wales). The current curriculum was introduced in September 2000. It includes certain core subjects but allows schools the flexibility to provide a broad and balanced curriculum. The National Assembly, in consultation with schools and LEAs sets attainment targets for each key stage. Pupils are assessed by written tasks and tests and also by teacher assessment. Standards of achievement and quality of teaching and learning are inspected and reported on by Estyn (Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales).

ACHIEVEMENTS and CHALLENGES

Good Practice

3.13 Evidence from Estyn's most recent annual report⁴ indicates that standards are good or very good in half of all lessons in both primary and secondary schools. The overall attainment of pupils in nearly every core subject and every key stage continues to improve. About half of all pupils gain at least five GCSE grades A*-C. Over the past ten years there has been a significant improvement in the quality of education and training provided and the standards achieved by pupils. The Committee congratulates teachers and their pupils on this achievement.

Under Achievement

3.14 In 2001, some 1,100 pupils left compulsory education at 16 with no recognised qualifications⁵. There is a drop in performance during the transition between primary school and secondary school.

Performance Gap

3.15 There is a wide variation in the performance of schools as measured by the key stage tasks and tests and teacher assessments. At secondary level the gap appears static but at primary level it seems to be closing. There is a strong relationship in the secondary phase between levels of disadvantage and performance. This relationship is less strong in primary schools but is still statistically significant. However, pupils in a large number of schools in disadvantaged areas progress at a greater rate than might be expected – demonstrating that cause and effect have complex underlying causes. Socio-economic status however is a key determinant of educational attainment. In respect of this, two particular challenges must be addressed by schools and the education service as a whole, namely improving the attainment of disadvantaged groups, and reducing the concentration of disadvantage in certain schools.

Gender Gap

3.16 Girls currently out-perform boys in almost all areas of the curriculum, particularly in languages. Again the reasons are complex. This gender imbalance appears to be reversed when it comes to finding rewarding jobs and careers, although the Committee did not receive evidence on this matter. Both these issues need to be addressed and schools can help by breaking down gender stereotypes in the curriculum and in careers advice.

Absenteeism

3.17 The overall absenteeism rate in secondary schools Wales is about 10%⁶. To put this into context, the number of pupils absent on average each day from secondary schools alone would fill some 17 medium-sized secondary schools. This problem affects not only the absentees, who are very likely to leave school with no qualifications, but also those who attend regularly. Many teachers have found that irregular attendance by pupils affects the overall progress of a class.

Low Skills Base

3.18 The Future Skills Wales survey found that half of all employers were disappointed at the lack of skills possessed by many school leavers. They particularly lacked communication skills.

4 – www.estyn.gov.uk

5 and 6 – www.learning.wales.gov.uk - paper ELL 15-02(p.4)

3.19 The Basic Skills Agency considers that almost 800,000 people in Wales have low levels of basic skills⁷. The Foundation Stage proposals and the proposed Learning Pathways Action Plan emphasise a new balance between knowledge, practical experience and essential skills. The National Basic Skills Strategy⁸ for Wales covers support for basic literacy and numeracy for all ages.

Language Diversity and Culture

3.20 In the past few years there has been a continuing decline in the study of modern foreign languages at GCSE and Advanced level. This is a worrying trend at a time when national boundaries are opening up throughout Europe and there are increasing opportunities for study and employment across the continent.

3.21 Of equal concern in our increasingly multiracial society, is the paucity of teaching and learning in languages spoken by many of those choosing to live and work in Wales. Schools should do more to value and harness the increasing linguistic and cultural diversity in Wales - to break down racial barriers, to broaden minds and to increase understanding and tolerance.

RECENT INITIATIVES by the WELSH ASSEMBLY GOVERNMENT

Learning Pathways 14-19

3.22 In October 2002, the Assembly Minister launched a consultation for proposals to broaden the curriculum for 14 to 19 year-olds: *Learning Country: Learning Pathways 14-19*⁹. The Committee welcomes these proposals because by valuing academic, vocational and mixed pathways equally they offer a way forward from current provision to a future that will provide a broader entitlement for all 14-19 year-olds. In particular, we support the aim of securing a better balance between:

- Learning – subject knowledge, technical and occupational knowledge;
- Opportunities to apply this knowledge in real life contexts to deepen understanding and to develop as a learner; and
- Opportunities to develop wider personal and interpersonal skills through practical experience.

Narrowing the Gap

3.23 In October 2002, the Assembly Minister published *Narrowing the Gap in the Performance of Schools*¹⁰. This was the report of a task-and-finish group of the Welsh Assembly Government and the Welsh Local Government Association. The report examined the factors that contributed to the gap in performance between secondary schools, particularly those in prosperous and deprived areas. Chapter 5 of this report was particularly relevant as it contained evidence on the impact of the community dimension of schools in

narrowing the gap. This included the importance of building a culture of success, tackling disaffection and supporting learners and their families.

7, 8, 9 and 10 - www.learning.wales.gov.uk

National Grid for Learning – NGfL Cymru

3.24 In January 2003, the Assembly Minister launched NGfL Cymru. This provides an Internet portal to a broad range of teaching and learning materials, for use by learners and pupils. The Committee considers that the NGfL Cymru will provide an increasingly important means of widening access to learning opportunities and resources not only in schools but also in colleges, libraries, homes and workplaces. In addition, it will provide a means for teachers to share ideas and to disseminate best practice.

Foundation Phase

3.25 In February 2003, the Assembly Minister launched a consultation on proposals for a foundation phase – *Learning Country: The Foundation Phase – 3 to 7 Years*¹¹. These proposals seek to promote learning through well-structured play, practical activity and investigation. The intention is to develop a curriculum for the foundation phase that offers a broad range of experiences and has a long-term effect on children's social and intellectual development. The Committee supports these proposals and awaits the outcome of the consultation with interest.

Bullying

3.26 In February 2003, the Assembly Minister launched a consultation on *Respecting Others*¹² – the Welsh Assembly Government's new guidance on tackling bullying in schools.

Absenteeism

3.27 In February 2003, the Assembly Minister informed the Committee of the Welsh Assembly Government's *Action Plan for Attendance*¹². This was the result of work by a group of key practitioners and experts with the aim of developing best practice.

PLANNING THE FUTURE

3.28 The process of change from now on will require careful planning and we consider that the Welsh Assembly Government should start preparing now. The Committee recommends that, following the forthcoming election, the appropriate Assembly Minister should prepare a response for the new committee, setting out a programme for managing the substantial changes required over the next 15 years to achieve a smooth transition to the school of the future.

11 and 12 – www.learning.wales.gov.uk

CHAPTER FOUR – THE FUTURE

COMMUNITY FOCUS AND WIDENING PARTICIPATION

Background

4.1 Having the school at the heart of a community is not a new concept. It can be traced back eighty years to Henry Morris, Head of Education for Cambridgeshire in the 1920s. At this time, problems of rural decline - the general migration from the countryside to towns in search of work and the loss of traditional crafts and skills - caused great concern. Morris argued that a new institution, the Village College, could play a significant role in the regeneration of rural communities.

4.2 His vision was to take the various vital but isolated activities in village life - the school, village hall, evening classes, Women's Institute, scouts, guides, library, sports and recreation clubs - and bring them together to create a new institution for the English countryside. The idea being that the whole would be greater than the sum of the parts. Henry Morris was not content merely to write about his ideas. He overcame many obstacles in raising funds and obtaining land and succeeded in seeing his vision take shape. The Prince of Wales opened the first such institution - Sawston Village College - in 1930. Village Colleges were later established in the English Midlands, Yorkshire, Devon and Monmouthshire.

Wales

4.3 In the *Narrowing the Gap* report referred to in paragraph 3.23, it was found that focus on community provision posed considerable challenges but also had potential to bring multiple benefits to learners, schools and their communities. The information in the report was based on evidence from 100 secondary schools in Wales, which had shown significant improvement over the last few years. This evidence was supplemented by information gained by the survey team during visits to 12 secondary schools with free school meal entitlements above 20%.

4.4 We were told of eight defining characteristics of a community school:

- A focus on social, emotional and health needs of all pupils. Each project is expected to offer a coherent range of services and each child should have a personal learning plan;
- Engagement with families, often including the development of a family support service in school;
- Engagement with the wider community, providing both the opportunity and the mechanism to build capacity in the local community;
- Integrated provision of school education, informal as well as formal education, social work and health education and promotion services;
- Integrated management often supported by an integration manager;
- Services delivered according to a set of integrated objectives and measurable outcomes, a significant feature in many cases being co-location;
- Commitment and leadership; and
- Multidisciplinary training and staff development.

4.5 The Committee learnt of several schools in Wales that were developing a community focus. These included Pen-y-Dre Comprehensive, near Merthyr Tydfil, Mountain Ash Comprehensive, in Rhondda Cynon Taff, St Cenydd Comprehensive, in Caerphilly, and Ysgol Bro Morgannwg in the Vale of Glamorgan.

England

4.6 The Committee was told of a pilot project involving 25 community schools in England. We also learnt about the Dukeries Complex in Nottinghamshire, which provides the following facilities:

- Community College for students aged 11 to 18, with excellent teaching and recreational facilities;
- Family Centre that provides a range of services – including social workers, health and education specialists - for parents and carers with children aged 6 weeks to 8 years;
- Day Centre that provides 30 places for older people;
- Day Service for adults with learning disability;
- Leisure Centre offers excellent sporting and recreation facilities;
- Training and Residential Centre;
- Youth Centre;
- Library and Information Centre; and
- Employment Support in partnership with the local authority and local Careers Service.

Scotland

4.7 The Committee was told about the New Community School (NCS) initiative in Scotland. This was launched in 1998 and 62 pilot projects are currently underway. Representatives of Estyn have visited some of these schools and reported favourably to the Committee. Projects vary from a single primary or secondary school to variations on a cluster theme. There are two pilot projects in each of the 32 LEAs in Scotland, apart from Orkney and Shetland. Each project has been designed locally to meet local needs. The Scottish Parliament has invested some £37 million in this programme.

4.8 There were five key goals for the NCS:

- Modernisation of schools and the promotion of social inclusion;
- Increasing the attainment of young people facing the destructive cycle of underachievement;
- Early intervention to address barriers to learning and maximising potential;
- Meeting the needs of every child, ensuring that services are focused through New Community Schools; and
- Raising parental and family expectations and participation in their children's education.

Elsewhere

4.9 In addition to those previously mentioned, we learnt of projects in Scandinavia and the United States of America.

Strategic Aims

4.10 The concept of the community school fits well with the National Assembly's four main themes of social inclusion, equal opportunities, sustainable development and bilingualism. It complements the national economic development strategy set out in *A Winning Wales*¹³, which calls for the creation of strong communities and also accords with the *Extending Entitlement*¹⁴ initiative. By developing a community focus, schools can raise the status of teaching and learning in the communities they serve. The Local Government and Housing Committee is currently examining issues related to community regeneration and sees the school as an important engine for change. In places where there are no other public services and community focus is lacking, the local school may be the only body able to act as a champion for change.

Partners

4.11 Estyn recently published an interesting and informative report entitled *Excellent Schools: A vision for schools in Wales in the 21st Century*¹⁵. We agree with Estyn that it will become increasingly important for schools to develop partnerships within their local community. We see partners acting as an agent for change, bringing new experiences and perspectives to teaching and learning. As well as parents and employers, the surrounding community often contains a range of valuable potential partners. These include police, fire services, environmental groups and a range of voluntary and other organisations that are willing to engage with schools and make a contribution to the curriculum. Members of local sports clubs could be invited to coach young children. Professional artists and musicians could contribute to work in the arts and technology.

4.12 Parents, relatives and other members of the community could provide valuable sources of living, oral history. For example, they could tell pupils of their experiences in crafts and industries that were once vital to the Welsh economy but have since declined. They could describe what life was like during their youth. They could describe games that were played and enjoyed in that increasingly distant era before television and computers. In this way members of the community, particularly older people, could bring a new vitality to the learning experience and could raise their own self-esteem by being valued, instead of derided or ignored.

4.13 We consider that schools in the future should provide childcare and nursery provision on site, to facilitate family learning. We consider they should stay open throughout the year and for longer hours than at present. School facilities would be made available for individuals and groups; for example, sports clubs, chess clubs, scouts, guides, health and fitness groups and local history and environmental societies. However, care should be taken that the services provided should complement, not compete with, existing facilities.

Attitudes and Skills

4.14 We recognise that for community schools to become a reality throughout Wales will require a significant change in culture, attitudes and work practices - not least amongst teachers and governors. They will need training to cope with a more managerial role and will also need to develop team-working skills. The Education Act 2002 gives LEAs and schools the power to provide services for the community. The Welsh Assembly Government will be carrying out a consultation shortly on the introduction of this new power from September 2003.

School Buildings

4.15 Several contributors, including the teaching unions, commented on the implications for school buildings. We feel it essential that new school buildings should be imaginatively designed to accommodate the staff, facilities and equipment necessary to provide the range of services referred to earlier. Significant capital resources have been committed by the National Assembly to achieve the target of having all school buildings in good physical condition and properly maintained by 2010. But that needs to embrace fitness for purpose – that is for delivery of the national curriculum in a stimulating and invigorating environment for teaching and learning. We consider that the school buildings of the future should be exemplars of energy efficiency and sustainable development. In drawing up their plans for new or remodelled school buildings and in setting budgets, local and diocesan authorities will need to ensure that the plans will accommodate the requirements of the school of the future.

CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT

Standards and Quality

4.16 We agree with ACCAC that using the school as a community resource has the potential for enhancing the curriculum and improving standards and quality of learning by:

- Increasing the range of subjects;
- Increasing usage by adults with young learners;
- Fostering links with business;
- Providing a hub for lifelong learning in each community – embracing continuing, adult and electronic learning.

4.17 The school curriculum has traditionally been based on a number of individual subjects. However, we are already seeing learning that does not fit neatly into these subject areas - for example, personal and social education (PSE) and work-related education (WRE) - both of which will become statutory parts of the national curriculum over the next two years. Others include sustainable development, equal opportunities, and basic and key skills. In addition there is the 'Cwricwlwm Cymreig' which seeks to promote the learning of Welsh culture and history across the curriculum.

4.18 We strongly believe that schools in the future should exist for teaching and learning. We believe that the quality and breadth of learning offered must be challenging and relevant. This means achieving an appropriate balance

between the teaching of knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes. We heard the phrase 'learning to learn' several times from presenters. We agree that learning is itself a subject to be mastered, together with thinking skills. We consider that learners should be encouraged to try different ways of tackling problems, to broaden their understanding of how particular problem solving techniques can be applied in different situations.

National Curriculum

4.19 The Committee heard views from Governors Wales and others about the national curriculum. There was broad agreement that it had eliminated past inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and learning provided across Wales. There was general consensus that the national curriculum was useful and should be retained. However, we feel that schools should take more account of local needs and circumstances in developing a broad and stimulating curriculum. We were told that this is happening starting to happen - for example, in parts of mid Wales where schools have focused on courses in leisure and tourism.

4.20 We believe that in the future the curriculum should become more flexible and less rigidly divided. There will be more need for teachers to collaborate with colleagues in planning lessons so as to complement each other's teaching. The Welsh Assembly Government's consultation document *Learning Country: Learning Pathways 14-19* referred to in paragraph 3.22, sets out to extend choice and flexibility post-14. It also seeks to extend opportunities for a wide range of crosscutting issues to permeate teaching and learning and to widen experience for this age group through work experience, community and volunteering opportunities. We support these aims.

Steiner Waldorf Schools

4.21 Representatives of Steiner Waldorf schools in Pembrokeshire and Cardiff impressed the Committee with their presentation. These schools have an ethos of encouraging young children to learn at their own pace through structured play. Their lessons are carefully designed to foster both personal and social learning. During the early years they teach by example and learning is integrated rather than subject-based. The curriculum is flexible and is responsive to the needs of the child. The Committee considers that the Steiner Waldorf principles are worthy of consideration.

Thematic Curriculum

4.22 Some secondary schools are already experimenting with teaching through a thematically based curriculum. One example is St John's School and Community College in Marlborough. In this school six modules are taught to span the year. A group of about six teachers, containing a range of subject specialists teaches each module. But in a typical lesson one teacher might have to cover a wide range of topics related to the current theme. This seems to work well and appears to motivate pupils to delve deeper into a subject. The teacher acts as a guide in the pupils' quest for knowledge. It is an example of 'learning to learn' referred to previously. We feel such methods should be developed further in the school of the future.

Pupils' Views on the Curriculum

4.23 Some of the thoughts on this topic contributed by school councils are given below:

- “The curriculum depends on individual likes and dislikes – perhaps it could be better matched to what individuals do best.”
- “The curriculum needs to be more relevant to what children and young people need; it needs to have some practical life skills and some work-related elements built in.”
- “Teach more rounded issues such as about property, recycling and community issues to stop violence and crime.”
- “Introduce more foreign languages, possibly German/Spanish/Russian.”
- “Introduce Law, Psychology and the SARA project in RE at Key Stage 4.”
- “Older pupils, from their own experience, were clear on the appeal of applied and vocational courses as a way of learning. They did not, however, see it as a replacement. It was seen as a further example of flexibility in delivery. There was no sense that vocational courses were in any way inferior to academic courses.”

Northern Ireland

4.24 We learnt that relevant authorities in Northern Ireland¹⁶ are currently exploring radical changes to curriculum and assessment arrangements. We consider that the Welsh Assembly Government and ACCAC should take note of these developments during the forthcoming review of the national curriculum. We feel it is important to learn from best practice overseas, particularly in the teaching and learning of modern foreign languages.

Welsh Language and Bilingualism

4.25 Last year the Committee carried out a policy review of the Welsh language in education and published a report, jointly with the Culture Committee – *Our Language: Its Future*¹⁷. The Welsh Assembly Government has recently responded to this report and published -*laith Pawb: A National Action Plan for the Welsh Language*¹⁸. This adopts a number of the Committee's recommendations and sets out a strategic framework for expanding the provision Welsh-medium teaching and learning, including measures to increase the number of Welsh-medium learners and teachers in schools and to increase Welsh-medium provision in the early years. This framework should also facilitate progress through the continuum of learning Welsh as a subject for all pupils.

4.26 The Committee feels that, in addition to Welsh as a subject, Welsh-medium and bilingual teaching and learning should be an integral part of the curriculum in the school of the future. The school should offer teaching and learning through the medium of Welsh in a wide range of subjects, for all age groups and in all areas. We consider there should be complementary expansion of Welsh-medium provision in further and higher education in order to facilitate continuity and remove existing barriers to bilingual teaching and learning. We recognise existing capacity problems and acknowledge the need to address them.

More Relevant Curriculum

4.27 The paper presented by ACCAC succinctly points the way towards achieving a more relevant curriculum. The Committee considers that those responsible for devising the curriculum for the school of the future should:

- Develop a consensus about the priorities for education to meet individual learners' needs for the future, taking account of the broader needs of Wales;
- Rethink the entitlement that reflects those priorities;
- Critically scrutinise the curriculum, recognising that content is only one dimension;
- Cater for individual preference, school and community needs; and
- Consider what needs to be assessed and also why, how and when?

Assessment for Learning

4.28 We consider that assessment methods should evolve with the changing nature of the curriculum in the school of the future. We heard interesting views on this topic from ACCAC and Professor Richard Daugherty, a member of the Assessment Reform Group (ARG). We learnt that current testing at key stages two and three is expensive to implement and can have a negative impact on the motivation and performance of some students. Professor Daugherty explained his ten principles of 'assessment for learning'. He defined 'assessment for learning' as the process of seeking and interpreting evidence for use by learners and their teachers to decide where the learners are in their learning, where they need to go and how best to get there.

4.29 Testing will still be required in the school of the future but we believe that this should be used as a tool for helping students to learn, rather than as an obstacle to be overcome. We believe that continuous assessment by teachers should be equally important and that effective use of such evaluation should inform and improve teaching practice. We consider that there should be support to ensure that assessment for learning, as an essential component for self-motivated learning, is a continuing element in all classroom activities. We consider that the testing regime in the future should be of a lighter touch than at present, possibly involving a sample of pupils in a given year rather than the whole cohort. We feel that assessment is an area worthy of further exploration by the new education committee, taking account of best practice in other countries – for example, France and Scotland.

MANAGEMENT, GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP

Key Partners

4.30 Whilst it is difficult to anticipate changes in the respective functions of local and national government over the next 15 years, we believe that local authorities will continue to play a major role in planning and supporting the school of the future. They will do so in partnership with schools and their governing bodies and the National Assembly. The Welsh Local Government Association recently published a document entitled '*The Future Role of Local Authorities in Education in Wales*'¹⁹. The main theme of this document was the need for clear definitions of roles and responsibilities of the various partners - the National Assembly, LEAs and schools - in order to provide political, community and educational leadership.

4.31 We believe that the National Assembly should continue to set out the strategic objectives for education and training in Wales. Local education authorities should play a leadership role in achieving these national objectives by devising and implementing complementary local policies, in partnership with their schools. We consider that local authorities should place education and training firmly at the heart of their wider responsibilities for local planning and provision of local services – including social services, library services, recreation and leisure facilities, transport and road safety.

Strategic Planning

4.32 At present, each local authority produces a three year Education Strategic Plan (ESP) which, in accordance with statutory requirements, sets out its proposals for school improvement and targets for attainment, attendance and exclusions. Authorities are required to consult their schools and other local partners in the preparation of their ESPs. The authority wide targets take account of the targets set by individual schools. Authorities are also required to produce early years and childcare plans, behaviour support plans and school organisation plans. The Welsh Assembly Government has given a commitment in its document *Freedom and Responsibility in Local Government*²⁰ to review the planning requirements on local authorities, in the light of their new overarching responsibility for community planning. We understand that the review of education plan requirements in that context will start shortly. This should meet our view that planning for school services should be integrated with community planning.

4.33 The new pupil level school census, which comes into operation fully in 2003, will enable more effective use of information on individual pupils and cohorts of pupils, so as to improve teaching and learning.

School Governors

4.34 School governors already provide a link with the community in which their school is set. Many are parents or represent local community and business interests. Governors Wales, which represents some 26,000 school governors in Wales, told the Committee that they welcomed the powers in the Education Act 2002 to enable governors to consult with their LEA on proposals for community use of their school. Governors Wales stressed the importance of schools as focal points in the community and as providers of community learning, leisure and recreation. Governors Wales stated that they intended to encourage governors to exercise the relevant powers under terms of the Education Act 2002.

4.35 The Committee acknowledges current problems in recruiting and retaining school governors. We consider that in the future governors should more closely reflect the community served by the school. We recognise that local authorities and governing bodies themselves are working to achieve this aim. We commend the efforts being made to hold meetings of governing bodies and governor training at times convenient to the governors and to deliver training in a variety of formats and locations. Where necessary, we consider that appropriate childcare should be provided. We recognise that, as for teachers, there is a need to reduce bureaucratic burdens on governors. We note that the National Assembly has already given a commitment to take account of this requirement when issuing guidance.

Self-Evaluation

4.36 The most effective schools are those with a knowledge and understanding of their current strengths and weaknesses and a clear vision of where they are going. In such schools all members of staff, including non-teaching staff, share values and a common understanding of the kind of place they want their school to be. We feel that self-evaluation should be a crucial component of the school of the future. We consider that this will help raise educational standards but will also motivate staff and pupils and develop the school as a learning community. All those involved with the school should be involved with self-evaluation. We feel it is particularly important to involve pupils. Pupils should be taught how to express opinions with reasoned argument and there should be effective means of communicating with senior managers, so pupils know their views are being heard.

4.37 The Committee considers that the growing emphasis on self-evaluation that Estyn has introduced into the inspection process since 1998 has helped to promote good practice in schools. The new inspection arrangements to be introduced in September 2004 will place schools' self-evaluation at the heart of the process. This increased emphasis on self-evaluation will encourage schools to be more open and objective in identifying strengths and areas for development in their quest for continuous improvement.

Staffing

4.38 We feel it is important that the employment arrangements for staff, teachers and support staff will need to take account of the character of the community focused school. Whilst the school buildings will be open

throughout the year, this does not mean that staff should be expected to work longer hours. We feel that schools may need to look at new patterns of employment to cover services provided for the community.

Mobility

4.39 We listened with interest to proposals from the teaching unions that the way teachers are employed should allow greater flexibility in the movement of teachers. They suggested that teachers should be employed to work in a group of schools rather than in individual institutions. This would facilitate meeting fluctuating demand for specific teaching posts and would also minimise the bureaucracy involved in recruitment and redundancy procedures. We feel that LEAs and governing bodies should give this suggestion due consideration.

Management

4.40 In Wales, responsibility for administration of the performance management arrangements for teachers lies with the local authorities, with performance reviews being carried out by Headteachers – and the management team in larger schools. We consider that in the future this process should be developed to reward teachers who demonstrate excellent teaching and a commitment to keep abreast of best practice. In this way the both the status and effectiveness of the teaching profession will be enhanced.

4.41 We consider it essential that the school of the future should be effectively managed. Its main resources will still be the pupils and staff - teachers, teaching assistants and classroom and other support staff. The Headteacher and his or her senior managers, with the help of governors, must review the roles and aptitudes of the various members of staff. They must clearly define roles and responsibilities and set targets. They must operate a fair and transparent performance management system, as required by regulations.

4.42 Given the multifaceted role of a community focused school, we consider there should be a member of the senior management team responsible for community related activity and for liaison with the local community. This person would have oversight of the day-to-day running of community provision, as well as a planning role.

4.43 We also consider that schools should make more use of administrators and information technology to carry out routine tasks, such as daily pupil registration and preparing timetables. This will enable senior managers and teachers to devote their time to raising standards and improving the quality of the curriculum, teaching and learning. We understand that expected changes to the School Teachers Pay and Conditions Document, arising from the teachers' workload agreement, are likely to require schools to take such steps in the near future.

FUNDING

Current Procedures

4.44 Current funding arrangements for local authority maintained schools are set out in primary legislation – *Schools Standards and Framework Act 1998 and the Financing and Maintained Schools Regulations 1999*. The National Assembly provides funding to local authorities through the annual local government revenue settlement. Local authorities determine how much of their budget to allocate to individual services, including education.

4.45 Local authorities first deduct funding for any non-school education functions they exercise. The remainder is the local schools budget (LSB). Local authorities may retain part of the LSB for certain purposes, for example some special educational needs provision and school transport. This leaves the individual schools budget (ISB). This is allocated to schools to provide delegated school budgets, in accordance with the local authority's funding formula. The authority must consult schools on the formula. The governing body for each school then determines how to use its budget for the year. Currently a local funding formula must allocate 75% of the delegated budget for each primary and secondary school by reference to pupil related factors. Up to 25% of the budget can be allocated from a menu of factors set out in the regulations. The regulations permit authorities to cushion the impact of changes in pupil numbers on school budgets, if they so wish. We understand that a number of authorities build protection factors into their formula.

General Principles

4.46 The purpose of considering funding in this report is neither to comment on current levels of funding nor to suggest levels for the future but rather to reflect on some general principles. The Committee feels that funding in the future should be guided by two main principles – equity and transparency. By this we mean that funding should be allocated by a system that is based on evidence, is clearly understood by all stakeholders and is administered fairly.

4.47 We also advocate two supplementary principles – core funding and stability. By stability we mean that LEAs and schools should have reasonable certainty of the funding they will receive over a period longer than a year – we suggest a planning period of three to five years.

Budget Forums

4.48 The Committee received evidence on the current variation in spending per pupil by local authorities across Wales. The Assembly Minister has provided the Committee with annual reports on these statistics. The average budgeted spend per pupil in 2002-03 was £3,167 but varied from £2,851 to £3,757 per pupil in individual authorities. We found no obvious link between spend per pupil and results achieved by pupils at the various key stages – a conclusion borne out by the Narrowing the Gap study referred to earlier. We consider that in future, funding should be better focused on results.

4.49 We hope that the school budget forums to be established under the terms of the Education Act 2002 will facilitate more effective and transparent

allocation of funds, by developing a better understanding between LEAs and schools of their respective needs and priorities.

Funding Review

4.50 In addition to the funding which local authorities allocated for education from their own budgets, they received grant funding from the National Council-ELWa for post-16 provision in schools and for adult and continuing education. The National Council-ELWa is undertaking a review of funding arrangements for all providers, including schools, with a view to introducing a new methodology from August 2004. The key principle being adopted by the Council is that funding and provision should focus on the individual learner, not the institution. The Committee awaits the outcome of this review with interest. The Committee considers that in future relevant funding bodies should collaborate to ensure that the interaction of their respective funding arrangements for schools is transparent and well understood. This will enable schools to plan ahead and manage their financial affairs with a reasonable amount of confidence.

THE TEACHER, TEACHING AND LEARNING

Role of the Teacher

4.51 The Committee firmly believes that in the future the teacher will continue to play a crucial role in the successful operation of the school. Whilst we believe that the main role of the teacher will remain that of directing the teaching and learning of their pupils, we consider that teachers of the future will need to broaden their range of skills and expertise. In the future, we see teachers as no longer working as individuals in classrooms but as managers of support staff.

Support Staff

4.52 We consider that in line with the recent National Agreement on Raising Standards and Tackling Workload, suitably qualified support staff, administrators and technicians, should assist teachers. Teachers will also need to work effectively with other professionals, parents and other members of the community.

Workload

4.53 The Committee was pleased that the Assembly Minister has recently signed the National Agreement with employers and most school workforce unions to reduce teachers' workload. The Welsh Assembly Government has committed some £21 million over the next three years to increase the level of administrative support in schools. In addition, some £1.4 million has been allocated to pilot and develop a 'change management programme' to help schools adopt working practices to help reduce teachers' workload. The Committee welcomes this investment and hopes that progress will be made to address the concerns of those unions who have not signed the agreement.

Leadership

4.54 We consider that Headteachers and classroom teachers should be given opportunities to develop leadership skills. Headteachers will clearly require more specialised training but classroom teachers should also be encouraged to demonstrate leadership - for example, trying different teaching methods, disseminating best practice, engaging parents in the learning process and motivating their pupils and colleagues.

Inspirational Teaching

4.55 The Committee agrees with Governors Wales that the most significant, permanent life changing experiences for pupils are those that arise from the inspirational practice of the best teachers. The Committee had a taste of this inspirational teaching practice during the presentation by Martin Williams – the Wales and UK ‘Secondary Teacher of the Year’ in the 2002 Teaching Awards. Martin Williams used a digital whiteboard to demonstrate how the imaginative use of music, poetry and dance could bring a history lesson to life. Having engaged the attention of his pupils, he encouraged them to actively participate in developing the lesson. His presentation was inspirational.

Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

4.56 We feel that continuing professional development for teachers will become increasingly important in the future. CPD encompasses all formal and informal learning that enables teachers to improve their own practice. The LEAs currently provide support to teaching staff through a professional development programme and most also provide appropriate training for newly qualified teachers and head teachers. The GTCW has started to develop proposals for CPD and has carried out two sets of pilot projects funded by the National Assembly.

4.57 Continuing professional development currently takes many forms, from attending courses to school based learning and undertaking research. In the future, we feel that CPD should be broadened to include management, team working, procurement and other skills relevant to the roles previously described. The type of training provided should reflect the experience of the teachers involved. Furthermore, we consider that this training should be adequately funded. We feel it is important that the Welsh Assembly Government, GTCW and LEAs should work closely together to ensure that there is a coherent programme of CPD in relation to local, school and individual priorities.

Facilitators and Mentors

4.58 We agree with the GTCW that teachers will need to develop their role as facilitators of learning and mentors of individual pupils, in addition to teaching whole classes or groups. We are sure that there will be many ideas to teach and learn in the school of the future that have not been dreamt of yet. To cope with these new discoveries, we feel it will be increasingly important for teachers to foster a love of learning and an understanding of how to learn – being receptive to new ideas but also subjecting them to critical appraisal.

Teaching Materials

4.59 To help them in their work in the classroom, teachers will continue to need excellent teaching material in both paper and electronic format. ACCAC showed the Committee examples of material they had produced and we were pleased to note the high quality and the fact that much of it was available in both Welsh and English. In the future, we consider that more teaching material should be commissioned that will help teach ideas and concepts that can be applied across the curriculum, rather than specific subjects.

4.60 In addition, we feel teachers should be given more encouragement and support to produce their own material and ideas for wider dissemination within their own school and with other schools. We feel that in the future the dissemination of best practice will be made easier by the use of information and communication technology.

4.61 We consider that teachers should make effective use of assessment data to allow pupils to develop at their own pace. We feel that information and communications technology (ICT) will play an increasingly important role in the classroom of the future. There will be opportunities for on-line assessment of pupils' work to assist in developing lesson plans and making learning enjoyable. We consider that any changes introduced in teaching practice in the future should be evidence based and developed through wide consultation with teachers and pupils.

Pupils' Views on Teaching and Learning

4.62 Some of the thoughts on this topic contributed by school councils are given below:

- “Teaching methods should be varied, with an emphasis on experiencing and seeing, as well as hearing about different aspects of subjects. They felt they should be able to go out and see the technical side of industry, and also that visiting experts in particular fields should address them in normal lessons, and not as supplementary activity during the lunch hour.”
- “A number of pupils mentioned that they wanted an opportunity to learn about the relevance of academic knowledge to their everyday lives. An example given by one boy was – not learning dry facts about the value of vitamins, minerals etc – but rather to put such knowledge into practice in living skills.”
- “Students value the teacher in the classroom. They were keen that teaching methodology went beyond worksheets but recognised that computer aided learning is effectively a form of electronic worksheet.”
- “Try and change the formal nature of lessons (present). More individual, group collaborative learning.”
- “Tomorrow’s teacher – an active listener who does not shout, who is interactive and relaxed, who treats children as individuals.”

- “Tomorrow’s teacher – works with individual learning programmes agreed with children, is very supportive across a range of needs.”

4.63 We firmly believe that the success of the school of the future will depend upon the skills, qualities and commitment of its teachers. We consider that in the school of the future teachers should continue to be well qualified, motivated and rewarded for the responsibilities they discharge.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY

First Steps

4.64 We learnt from Professor Stephen Heppell and Martin Williams how ICT is already being used to provide stimulating and inspiring lessons. The Welsh Assembly Government has funded the provision of digital whiteboards, which allow interactive participation by pupils during lessons, in every school in Wales. This is an invaluable tool for the classroom teacher and gives a glimpse of the shape of things to come. In 15 years time we have no doubt that developments in ICT will have moved into the realms of science fiction and the digital whiteboard will be regarded as a quaint curiosity from a bygone age – just as the blackboard is now. But at least we have taken the first steps towards the future.

Broadening Access

4.65 We agree with Estyn that how to exploit technological advances to bring the greatest benefit to all pupils will be a major challenge for all schools. The scope provided by the technology for distance learning will bring into question the need for pupils to attend school regularly at fixed times of the day.

4.66 We believe that there are important health and safety issues related to use of the equipment and also exposure to inappropriate material on websites and Internet ‘chat rooms’. All these matters will have significant implications for the school of the future but we believe that the overall impact of ICT will be beneficial and will help to unlock potential for more imaginative teaching and learning.

4.67 We also consider that ICT and the Internet will provide a valuable means of schools collaborating on joint projects within Wales and beyond. There will be exciting opportunities to learn about other countries not just by reading books or watching television but by communicating directly with learners in these countries. We feel there will be tremendous potential here for developing learning in the areas of sustainable development, equal opportunities and global citizenship.

ICT Advisory Panel and ICT Task Force

4.68 The Committee carried out a policy review on ICT in 2001 and published a report - *Information and Communication Technology in Education*²¹. This recommended that the Welsh Assembly Government should establish an Advisory Panel to oversee a 3-year development plan for ICT in schools in

Wales and also an ICT Task Force to implement this plan, in partnership with LEAs and schools. These recommendations were accepted and these bodies have been established. We hope that the new education committee will monitor progress on implementation of the ICT strategy in schools.

ICT Training

4.69 We feel it is important that teachers, support staff and learners are given regular training in the use of ICT equipment and software. ICT is just a tool and we feel there could be a danger of the technology masking poor teaching practice. We consider, therefore, that teachers should receive training in how to make the most effective use of ICT in delivering excellent teaching and learning. We consider that in the future there will be more opportunities for such training to be provided on-line.

Administration

4.70 We believe that the administration of schools will be greatly improved by significant future investment in ICT. We consider that, for example, all schools should have electronic registration, to improve the monitoring of pupil attendance. We learnt that such technology is already being used in some schools in Wales – for example, Ysgol Bro Morgannwg in the Vale of Glamorgan. We learnt that this school also makes use of digital display boards to keep pupils informed of forthcoming activities and classes.

4.71 We consider that ICT has great potential for reducing the time involved in the collection and storage of data involved in the day-to-day management of schools. We do not believe that schools will ever become free of paper but the school of the future should be relatively uncluttered – clearing space for more important activities.

4.72 We feel that schools should employ sufficient administrative, secretarial and ICT support staff to harness the full potential of advances in technology. This should significantly reduce the bureaucratic burdens on teachers, enabling them to concentrate on teaching and supporting the learning and development of pupils.

Reporting and Assessment

4.73 We consider that ICT will also be increasingly used to record and process assessment data on pupils. This will help teachers in their report writing and continuing assessment of pupils and also in amending their teaching practice to keep pace with the progress of individual learners.

Participation and Exchange of Ideas

4.74 We consider that ICT and the internet will be used increasingly for accessing up-to-date and relevant information and exchanging ideas on matters of interest to learners including, courses, learning materials, advice and leisure pursuits. The Welsh Assembly Government has established *Canllaw Online*²², which provides such a service and also *Funky Dragon*²³, which encourages younger learners to participate in issues that concern them.

Hardware and Software

4.75 We consider that schools will need to ensure that sufficient allowance is made in their budget for maintaining and updating hardware and software, when. All schools are already connected to the Internet and, as broadband technology becomes available across Wales, the speed of data transfer will increase significantly. We feel that the matters covered in the Committee's ICT report referred to at paragraph 4.71 should be addressed in the school of the future.

ENRICHING THE LEARNING EXPERIENCE

Health Promoting Schools

4.76 The Welsh Network of Healthy School Schemes (WNHSS) promotes the development of health promoting schools in Wales. WNHSS encourages the development of local healthy school schemes within a common national framework. These in turn, encourage the development of health promoting schools in their area. Some schools in Wales have been involved in a pilot project as part of the European Network of Health Promoting Schools²⁴. The Welsh Assembly Government accredits local schemes. Pembrokeshire was the first to receive accreditation in 2001, followed by Conwy, Gwynedd, Anglesey, Cardiff and Swansea. Health promoting schools involve pupils in a wide range of activities including breakfast clubs, healthy tuck shops and events such as healthy picnics with parents.

Imagination and Creativity

4.77 We believe that advances in computers, photographic and audio equipment will allow pupils to develop their imagination and creative skills – for example, by making films about their family, friends, school or local community. In his presentation, Professor Heppell showed the Committee how relatively young pupils have demonstrated remarkable technical and creative ability in such projects.

Out of School Hours Learning (OSHL)

4.78 The Committee was told of the valuable contribution offered by out of school hours learning. We heard interesting presentations from XL Wales and Education Extra. They told us that OSHL provision had increased dramatically over the past four years, with support from the New Opportunities Fund. We were pleased to learn that XL Wales intended to expand its provision throughout Wales. Many of these activities involve families and the wider community and so accord with the Committee's vision of a community focused school. Education Extra identified three categories of OSHL activities:

- Enabling – those designed to reinforce basic and key skills;
- Extending – those that build on classroom activities, for example through homework clubs, arts and sports activities; and
- Enriching – those providing opportunities that are different from the normal curriculum, for example chess, debating, farming or rural science projects and community activities.

Structured Play

4.79 We consider that more use should be made of learning through structured play, particularly for younger pupils. Young children have an ability to absorb knowledge and play is a vital means of engaging their attention, focussing their minds and harnessing their energy. Such methods are at the heart of the Steiner Waldorf curriculum referred to previously and are the focus of the consultation proposals for the Foundation Stage.

Imaginative Architecture and Ysgol y Wern

4.80 We feel that the school of the future should be a place where learners want to attend and are made to feel welcome. The building should be energy efficient, secure and provide classrooms and leisure areas equipped with the latest technology. There should be space for quiet contemplation and also private rooms for mentoring and counselling. There should be sound-proofed rooms for music making. Furniture should be comfortable as well as durable.

4.81 Schools should be proud of their pupils' achievements and so there should be provision inside and outside to display pupils' work. All learners should be given an opportunity to have their work displayed, regardless of age or ability.

4.82 The Headteacher of Ysgol y Wern Primary School in Cardiff kindly invited the Committee Chair, Clerk and Deputy Clerk to the school to view the pupils models of their school of the future and to discuss their designs. We were most impressed with their work, particularly their emphasis on imaginative architecture, sustainable development and disabled access. Some extracts from their design notes are given below:

- "Pyramid shaped school."
- "Coloured windows, soft floors and magic chairs."
- "More glass, plastic and metal - instead of bricks."
- "Grow our own fruit and fresh vegetables to keep us healthy."
- "Solar power or windmill."
- "Ramps for disabled pupils everywhere and wide automatic doors."
- "Nature dome with animals and flowers."
- "Glass ceiling to help study nature."
- "Athletics track turning automatically into a swimming pool."

Pupils' Views on Enriching the Learning Experience

4.83 Some of the thoughts on this topic contributed by school councils are given below:

- “A year 9 pupil noted a genuine need for close contact with the world of work in key stage 3, before pupils are asked to make their choices.”
- “While year 11 pupils applauded the opportunities, experiences and skills they obtained by participating in the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme, they wished to see opportunities such as these ‘on the curriculum’.”
- “Pupils expressed a desire for a consultation period at the end of the official school day, so that they might meet with teachers who could help them overcome problems with their schoolwork.”
- “Pupils suggested that a wider choice of sports activities could be ensured if specialists in different sports could provide training for pupils at the end of the school day. This would not be a supplementary activity but part of the national curriculum – and also something to be enjoyed.”
- “Students were strongly in favour of teachers using differing teaching approaches and having groups able to work at different tasks within the same class.”
- “Students appreciated the support of homework clubs.”
- “Students felt greater access to drop-in centres at lunch-time and after school would be helpful.”
- “Greater use and availability of interactive whiteboards.”
- “Longer school days and longer weekends.”
- “All classrooms should be bright, colourful, clean, well-equipped and carpeted.”
- “Even more display areas for pupil projects.”
- “Many suggestions were made on this topic. They included more field trips, presentations from outside speakers, public debates and more enjoyable homework – not just the usual essay.”

CHAPTER FIVE – KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 The Committee has made various suggestions and recommendations in the body of the report. We intend that these should be given due consideration by the new Assembly Minister and the appropriate committee.

5.2 Our key recommendations are that:

- 1. Our vision for a community focused school should provide the blueprint for the school of the future;**
- 2. The new Assembly Minister should report to the appropriate committee, in response to this report, setting out a programme for managing the substantial changes required over the next 15 years;**
- 3. The appropriate committee, with advice from the reference group, should carry out further exploration of the following issues:**
 - Community Focused Schools - evidence from existing schools;**
 - Curriculum and Assessment - evidence from current research;**
 - Enriching the Learning Experience - evidence from overseas.**
- 4. The Welsh Assembly Government recognises the importance of schools in countering social disadvantage.**

Policy Review: School of the Future

Terms of Reference

1. The policy review will identify possible changes in the roles and operation of primary and secondary schools in 10 to 15 years. The review will recommend policy developments necessary to take account of these anticipated changes, building on the strategy set out in *The Learning Country*.
2. The policy review will focus on the following issues:
 - The school as a community resource;
 - Use of, and developments in, information technology;
 - Teaching methods;
 - Curriculum;
 - Funding;
 - Widening opportunity and participation; and
 - Adding value to the education and school experience.
3. The policy review will take account of the National Assembly's four main themes:
 - Sustainable development;
 - Equal opportunities;
 - Social inclusion; and
 - Welsh Language.
4. It is intended to start gathering evidence in October 2002 and to report by March 2003.

Policy Review: School of the Future

Reference Group

Organisation	Representative
ACCAC (Qualifications, Curriculum, Assessment Authority for Wales)	John Valentine Williams (Chief Executive)
Association of Directors of Education Wales (ADEW)	Alun Davies (Chair)
BBC Wales	Dr Eleri Wyn Lewis (Director of Education Department)
Estyn	Susan Lewis (Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales)
Governors Wales	Colin Thomas (Director)
General Teaching Council for Wales (GTCW)	Mrs Gwen Williams (Headteacher, Edwardsville Infants School)
ELWa-National Council	Lesley Virgin (Head of Quality)
Universities Council for the Education of Teachers, Cymru (UCET Cymru)	Professor David Egan (Chair)
Ultralab, University of East Anglia	Professor Stephen Heppell (Director)
Welsh Language Board	Meirion Prys Jones, (Team Leader: Language Planning Team)
Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA)	Dr Chris Llewelyn, (Head of Education, Training and Cultural Affairs)
Teaching Unions:	Geraint Davies - Secretary, National Association of Schoolmasters and Union of Women Teachers, Wales (NASUWT Cymru) Brian Rowlands -Secretary, Secondary Heads Association, Wales

ELL Committee Chair: Gareth Jones AM

ELL Committee Members: Alun Pugh AM (Labour), Mick Bates AM (Liberal Democrat), Jonathan Morgan AM (Conservative) and Helen Mary Jones AM (Plaid Cymru)

ELL Committee Secretariat: Chris Reading (Clerk) & Holly Pembridge (Deputy Clerk)

DfTE Officials: Richard Davies (Director), Elizabeth Williams (Head of Youth Policy Team), Elizabeth Taylor (Head of Schools Management Division)

**Policy Review: School of the Future
Schedule of papers**

All these papers can be found on the National Assembly's website at www.wales.gov.uk in the committees section.

Name	Paper Reference	Date
National Assembly - Department for Training and Education - Issues paper	ELL 15-02 (p.4)	24 October 2002
NIACE Dysgu Cymru - Adult Learning	ELL 16-02 (p.2)	7 November 2002
XL Wales – Out of School Hours Learning	ELL 17-02 (p.2)	21 November 2002
Nant y Cwm and the Fountain School Steiner Schools – Alternative Curriculum	ELL 17-02 (p.3)	21 November 2002
General Teaching Council for Wales - The Role of the Teaching Profession	ELL 17-02 (p.4)	5 December 2002
Professor Stephen Heppell – Director of Ultralab - Development and use of ICT	ELL 17-02 (mins)	5 December 2002
Martin Williams , St Cenydd School – UK Secondary Teacher of the Year – Development and use of ICT	ELL 17-02 (mins)	5 December 2002
Estyn – Evidence Based Overview	ELL 18-02(p.2)	19 December 2002
Education Extra – Out of School Hours Learning	ELL 01-03 (p.2)	23 January 2003
Governors Wales – The Role of the School Governor	ELL 01-03 (p.3)	23 January 2003
ACCAC – Curriculum, Assessment and Qualifications	ELL 02-03 (p.1)	6 February 2003
Professor Richard Daugherty – University of Wales, Aberystwyth - Assessment	ELL 02-03 (p.2)	6 February 2003