

Education Matters

1. **Professor Sir Ian Diamond's report (September 2016) on the future of HE funding in Wales.**

At the heart of the Diamond recommendations is a re-working of the students support package to move towards a simple system that recognises the holistic costs of HE study to students, namely fees and maintenance. The idea of progressive universalism, which has guided policy making in Wales since devolution is reflected in a proposed £1000 non-means tested Maintenance Grant for all full-time undergraduates together with an income-related Maintenance Grant, that at its maximum level covers the fully the term-time costs of eligible students from the lowest income households. In addition, loans to the level of the maximum grant would be made available to those not eligible for the maximum grant. Similar provision would also be made available for p/t students, and a variety of packages will be made available to those who have had support from social care Services, disabled students and parents who wish to study. Welsh language provision is also to be supported through the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol to 2016/17 funding levels of £5.8m. It is also recommended that PG study and Research students should also receive the same level of Maintenance and tuition fee support as undergraduate students together with scholarships up to 3 years duration for 150 research students per year. If these recommendations were accepted, they would come into effect in 2018/19.

2. **Consultation for the accreditation of ITE programmes in Wales.** Consultation focuses on a proposal for reforming ITE accreditation which would:

- a) pass the role of accrediting ITE courses from the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales to the Education Workforce Council;
- b) provide new criteria for the accreditation of ITE programmes.

The vision for ITE in Wales is underpinned by the Welsh Government's document *Qualified for Life*. The Teacher Education Accreditation Group identified 5 fundamental areas of change for ITE in Wales:

- a) An increased role for schools;
- b) A clearer role for universities;
- c) Joint ownership for the programme;
- d) Structured opportunities to link school and university learning and
- e) The centrality of Research.

New ITE Partnership schemes are to commence delivery of the new programme on 2nd September 2019.

3. Following the recommendations of the Donaldson Report the **Digital Competence Framework** started in schools throughout Wales on 1 September 2016. Organised along the lines of the Literacy and Numeracy schemes and in addition to the ICT lessons, it will focus on a)Citizenship b)Competence and Collaboration c)Producing and d)Data and Computational thinking, e.g. problem solving. It is envisaged that the Framework will be fully implemented by 2021.

4. I have regularly sent **Welsh Government Dysg eNewsletters** and **Estyn** updates to the Rev.Hywel Richards.

5. **Free Church Education Committee (England and Wales).** I attended the latest meeting in London on 19th October. (i) Two very informative and worthwhile presentations were given by Patricia

Hannam, Hampshire County Inspector/Adviser and Deborah Weston from the NATRE Research Office focusing on Free Church Engagement with schools in England. Particular emphasis was given to the importance of incorporating the statutory spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of learners into classroom practice. (ii) As a result of the rather different state of RE in England, National RE bodies there are seeking, 1) More trained and qualified teachers of RE, 2) All one year primary ITE students must receive a minimum of 12 hours of subject specific training in RE, 3) The Government should hold schools to account for the level of provision and standards of teaching of RE as it is a statutory subject. (iii) I was given the opportunity of informing members of current developments in Wales, specifically the recommendations of Sir Ian Diamond's report on the future of HE funding, consultation for the accreditation of ITE programmes in Wales and the launch of the Digital Competence Framework in schools.

The next meeting of this committee which I hope to attend will be a Residential Meeting at Westhill College, Birmingham on the 15th and 16th March, 2017.

Vaughan Salisbury 10/11/2016