

Education Issues Report

1. Estyn's Annual Report 2017-18

The standard of primary schools has improved but only half of the secondary schools rated well or in particular last year, according to inspectors. Estyn's Chief Inspector of Education and Training, Meilyr Rowlands, has said that the improvements are "encouraging" with eight out of 10 primary or well-educated primary schools. The number of primary schools considered special has doubled since last year: from 4% to 8%. According to the results, the number of well-graded or better secondary schools has remained the same. The report says in half of the secondary schools that:

- **weakness in learning and assessment;**
- **Lack of consistency in leadership;**
- **Most pupils do not succeed according to their ability by reaching compulsory school age.**

Pupils' wellbeing is known as a strength in primary schools and almost all were rated well or great in this area.

2. A level Differences between Wales and England. Since the publication of the Review of Qualifications (2012), reformed A and AS levels have been introduced in Wales. A) In Wales, the subject content of A levels is broadly similar to those in England, but there is a Welsh perspective where appropriate. B) In Wales, A levels retain practical or non-examination assessments where they are assessing an important part of the subject, with these assessments contributing towards the final grade. In England, assessment in the reformed qualifications is mainly by exam taken at the end of the course. C) Also, in Wales, the AS level contributes 40 per cent to the full A level but in England, AS results do not count towards an A level.

3. National Academy of Educational Leadership

Kirsty Williams, Cabinet Secretary for Education officially launched the National Academy of Educational Leadership on 16 May 2018. On 1 May 2018 Dr Sue Davies was appointed Chair of the Academy. The Academy will not itself deliver learning. It will have a strong on-line presence and its core objectives will be to: a) Ensuring the availability of programmes and provision to support leadership development, and where there are gaps, commissioning suitable provision where there are gaps; b) Quality assure provision through a process of endorsement; c) Promote the use and accessibility of leadership research and national and international best practice; d) Offer support and advice on leadership career pathways; e) Create a community of peers and offer information and advice. It is expected that Academy programmes will be up and running in 2019.

4. The Devolution of Teachers' Pay and Conditions to the Wales Educational system

The Wales Act 2017 amended the Government of Wales Act 2006 and devolved powers to Wales including control of teachers' pay and conditions of service in Wales. Since September 2018, the Welsh Government has been responsible for determining pay and conditions for teachers in Wales. These powers are planned to be used from September 2019 onwards creating a system which will be tailored to Wales.

5. Welsh Government Consultation Document, Our National Mission: A Transformational Curriculum. (see my response in the appended document).

6. Welsh Government Consultation Document, The New Curriculum. (see my response in the appended document).

7. Free Church issues. I was unable this year to attend the FCEC Residential at Woodbrooke College, Birmingham, due to family matters. However, I did send documentation to the FCEC secretary to update her on developments in Wales.