

Cofnod y Trafodion The Record of Proceedings

[Y Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg](#)

[The Children, Young People and Education
Committee](#)

24/09/2015

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

The proceedings are recorded 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

Angela Burns	Ceidwadwyr Cymru Welsh Conservatives
Keith Davies	Llafur Labour
Suzy Davies	Ceidwadwyr Cymru Welsh Conservatives
Bethan Jenkins	Plaid Cymru The Party of Wales
David Rees	Llafur (Cadeirydd Dros Dro y Pwyllgor) Labour (Temporary Chair of the Committee)
Aled Roberts	Democratiaid Rhyddfrydol Cymru Welsh Liberal Democrats
Simon Thomas	Plaid Cymru The Party of Wales

Eraill yn bresennol
Others in attendance

Ian Budd	Cyfarwyddwr Arweiniol Gogledd Cymru, GwE Lead Director of North Wales, GwE
Eifion Evans	Cyfarwyddwr Strategol: Dysgu a Phartneriaethau / Cyfarwyddwr Arweiniol Rhanbarthol, ERW Strategic Director: Learning and Partnerships / Regional Lead Director, ERW
Huw Foster Evans	Rheolwr Gyfarwyddwr, GwE Managing Director, GwE
Betsan O'Connor	Rheolwr Gyfarwyddwr, ERW Managing Director, ERW

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

Sarah Bartlett	Dirprwy Clerc Deputy Clerk
Marc Wyn Jones	Clerc Clerk
Sian Thomas	Y Gwasanaeth Ymchwil Research Service

*Dechreuodd y cyfarfod am 09:33.
The meeting began at 09:33.*

Cynnig i Ethol Cadeirydd Dros Dro Motion to Elect a Temporary Chair

[1] **Mr Jones:** Bore da. Yn **Mr Jones:** Good morning. In the absence of the Chair this morning, the first item on the agenda is the election of a temporary Chair. I therefore ask for nominations.

[2] **Aled Roberts:** Gwnaf i enwebu **Aled Roberts:** I nominate David Rees. David Rees.

[3] **Mr Jones:** Rwy'n datgan felly **Mr Jones:** I therefore declare that David Rees is appointed temporary Chair in accordance with Standing Order 17.22.

Cyflwyniad, Ymddiheuriadau a Dirprwyon Introductions, Apologies and Substitutions

[4] **David Rees:** Good morning. Can I welcome Members and the public to this morning's session of the Children, Young People and Education Committee? Can I go through the processes first? Remember, Members, it is a bilingual meeting and, if anyone needs simultaneous translation from Welsh to English, it is available on the headphones via channel 1. If anyone requires amplification on the headphones, that's channel 2. There are no fire drills scheduled for this morning. So, if one does take place, please follow the directions of the ushers and leave the building to the appointed place. If you have mobile phones, can you please either make sure they're off or switched to 'silent' so they don't interfere with the broadcasting equipment? And that includes things like iPads as well. We've received apologies from John Griffiths and our Chair, Ann Jones. Can I wish Ann Jones a speedy recovery? We've not received indications of any substitutions this morning. Are there any declarations of interest that Members wish to make before we start today's proceedings?

[5] **Simon Thomas:** Mae gen i **Simon Thomas:** I have a child in an

blentyn yn un o ysgolion ERW. ERW school

[6] **Aled Roberts:** Mae gen i blentyn yn un o ysgolion GwE. **Aled Roberts:** I have a child in one of the GwE schools.

[7] **Keith Davies:** Rwyf i ar fwrdd llywodraethu un o ysgolion ERW. **Keith Davies:** I am on the board of governors in an ERW school.

[8] **Aled Roberts:** O, ie, gwell imi gadarnhau hynny hefyd. **Aled Roberts:** Oh, yes, I should also confirm that, too.

[9] **David Rees:** Anyone else? Okay. Well, I'll put on record that my grandchildren, therefore, are also in a school under the ERW consortium.

09:35

Trafodaeth â Chonsortia Addysg Rhanbarthol—Ein Rhanbarth ar Waith (ERW)

Discussion with Regional Education Consortia—Education through Regional Working (ERW)

[10] **David Rees:** Okay, if we move on, then, to the next item of business. This morning, we continue our sessions looking at the regional consortia and the effectiveness of the consortia. We welcome the first witnesses, who are representing ERW, or Education through Regional Working. Good morning and welcome. I welcome Eifion Evans, who is the strategic director of learning and partnerships. And can I welcome Betsan O'Connor, who is the—chief executive or managing director?

[11] **Ms O'Connor:** Managing director.

[12] **David Rees:** The managing director of ERW. Thank you for the paper you submitted to the committee. Obviously, we have some questions that we wish to pursue with you in relation to the paper and, perhaps, other areas all around the consortia. If we start those questions—we'll go straight into them. Simon Thomas.

[13] **Simon Thomas:** Diolch, Gadeirydd. Yn gyntaf oll, ar sail y papur rydych chi wedi'i gyflwyno i'r pwyllgor, a fedrwch chi ddweud i ba **Simon Thomas:** Thank you, Chair. First of all, on the basis of the paper that you submitted to the committee, can you tell us to what extent it's

raddau y mae modd priodoli'r gwelliant sydd wedi bod dros ardal ERW i waith y consortiwm, a faint sydd oherwydd gwaith yr awdurdodau lleol?

possible to attribute the improvement that there has been over the ERW region to the work of the consortium, and how much is down to the work of the local authorities?

[14] **Mr E. Evans:** Océ; os gwnaf i ddechrau. A gaf i, yn gyntaf, ymddiheuro ar ran Cynghorydd Ali Thomas? Cynghorydd Ali Thomas sy'n arwain y cydbwyllgor yn ERW. Roedd wedi dymuno dod gyda ni y bore yma, ond yn anffodus mae cabinet gydag ef yn Nedd Port Talbot. Felly, byddai ef hefyd wedi dymuno bod yma.

Mr E. Evans: Okay; if I could start. May I, first of all, apologise on behalf of Councillor Ali Thomas? Councillor Ali Thomas leads the joint committee in ERW. He had wanted to be here with us this morning, but unfortunately he has a cabinet meeting in Neath Port Talbot. So, he also would have wanted to be here.

[15] O safbwynt, wedyn, y cynnydd sydd wedi bod, byddwn i'n hyderus i ddweud bod y cynnydd, yn enwedig yn y canlyniadau sydd wedi dod i mewn eleni, yn benodol i lawr i'r cydweithio agos iawn sydd wedi digwydd ar draws rhanbarth ERW. Mae cysondeb gyda ni bellach o ran y ffordd a'r fethodoleg mae'r ymgynghorwyr her yn ymdrin â'n hysgolion ni—nid yn unig o roi'r her strategol iddyn nhw, ond, yn ogystal â hynny, adnabod lle mae angen y gefnogaeth fwyaf addas a mwyaf priodol ar gyfer codi'r safonau yna. Rwy'n dewis fy ngeiriau yn ofalus. Rydym ni'n dawel hyderus bod ERW wedi gwneud cynnydd sylweddol iawn eleni. Mi fydd y data hynny yn cael eu dilysu mewn cwpwl o fisoedd, ond rwy'n credu ei fod yn rhywbeth, fel rhanbarth gyfan, rydym ni'n gallu rhoi yn benodol i lawr i'r cydweithio

From the point of view of the progress that has been made, I would confidently say that the progress, particularly in this year's results, is specifically down to the very close collaboration that's happened across the ERW region. We now have consistency in terms of the way and the methodology that the challenge advisers deal with our schools—not only in posing that strategic challenge, but also identifying the most suitable and most appropriate support is needed in order to raise those standards. I'm choosing my words carefully, here. We are quietly confident that ERW has made very significant progress this year. Those data will be validated in a few months' time, but I think it's something that, as a region, we can put down primarily to close collaboration; under Betsan's

agos; dan arweiniad Betsan, rydym wedi llwyddo gwneud hynny.

leadership, we have succeeded in doing that.

[16] **Simon Thomas:** Diolch am hynny, ac rwy'n gweld eich bod chi wedi rhoi'r ffigwr amlinellol yn y dystiolaeth rydych wedi ei chyflwyno. Petawn ni'n edrych yn ôl dros y tair blynedd diwethaf, ers dechrau'r holl broses, roedd ERW trwyn ar y blaen, fel petai—ychydig—ac mae'r patrwm yna wedi aros, ond fedrwch chi ddadlau bod ambell i gonsortiw arall wedi cynyddu mwy. Efallai bod ganddynt fwy o job i'w gwneud, hefyd, cofiwch, ond gan mai gwaith y consortiw yw gwella ysgolion, a ydych chi hefyd yn dawel hyderus bod hynny'n rhywbeth sy'n digwydd yn gyson nawr, dros ardal y consortiw, a bod yr arfer da yn treiddio trwyddo?

Simon Thomas: Thank you for that, and I see that you have given the outline figure in the evidence that you have submitted. If we were to look back over the past three years, since this process first began, ERW was just a little bit ahead at the time, and that pattern has remained, but you could argue that a few of the other consortia have improved to a greater degree. Perhaps they had a bigger job to do, of course, but as the consortium's job is to improve school performance, are you also quietly confident that that is something that is consistently happening, now, over the consortium's region, and that the good practice is filtering through?

[17] **Ms O'Connor:** Beth rydym wedi trio sicrhau yw—. Oherwydd ein bod ni, fel rhanbarth, yn gweithio fel partneriaeth agos iawn gyda'r awdurdodau lleol, nid oes ffin. Rydym yn gallu sicrhau cysondeb ac mae arfer da rydym yn gallu tynnu arno ar draws ardal eang—fel rydych chi'n ymwybodol, mae'n ardal ddaearyddol eang—felly mae'r arfer orau yna yn gallu treiddio, mae'n gallu teithio, ac rydym ni, rwy'n credu, yn gallu gwneud camau, wedyn. Efallai eu bod nhw'n gamau bach, ond maen nhw'n gamau cyson, da, ac mae hynny'n hollbwysig i sicrhau dilyniant dros gyfnod hir.

Ms O'Connor: What we have tried to ensure is—. Because we, as a region, work in very close partnership with the local authorities, there is no boundary. We can ensure consistency and there is good practice that we can draw on from across a very broad area—as you are aware, it is a very broad geographical area—so that best practice can permeate, and can be rolled out, and I think that we can then take steps. They may be small steps, but they are consistent steps, and good steps, and that is crucial to ensure continuity over the long term.

[18] Rydym hefyd yn gwybod, o ran perfformiad plant â phrydiau ysgol am ddim, fod y cynnydd yna hyd yn oed yn fwy cyflym na'r cynnydd rydym ni'n ei wneud ar y prif ddangosydd. Felly, rydym eto yn hapus iawn gyda'r cynnydd maen nhw'n ei wneud achos rydym yn gwybod bod hynny'n rhywbeth mae'n rhaid i ni i gyd weithio arno, ac rydym ni yn ERW wedi gweithio a ffocysu ar hynny yn benodol, achos ein bod ni yn moyn ffocysu ar y prif nod, sef codi safonau i ddysgwyr.

We also know, in relation to the performance of children receiving free school meals, that progress there is even greater than the progress on the main indicator. So, we are, once again, very pleased with the progress made there, because we know that that is something that we must all collaborate on, and we in ERW have worked on that and focused on that specifically, because we want to focus on the main aim, which is to enhance standards for pupils.

[19] **Simon Thomas:** Rydych chi newydd sôn am blant sy'n derbyn prydiau ysgol am ddim, ac roedd hynny'n un o'r llefydd lle'r oedd adolygiad Estyn wedi canfod, er gwaetha'r ewyllys ac er gwaethaf ambell i strategaeth, fod diffyg darpariaeth ar draws y consortia. A ydych chi wedi dysgu o'r broses yna? A ydych chi wedi newid unrhyw beth yn sgil adroddiad Estyn?

Simon Thomas: You have just talked about children who receive free school meals, and that was one of the areas where Estyn's review found that, despite good will and despite the odd strategy, there was a lack of provision across the consortia. Have you learned from that process? Have you changed anything as a result of Estyn's report?

[20] **Ms O'Connor:** Un o'r pethau rydym ni wedi ei wneud yn sgil adroddiad Estyn yw tynnu at ei gilydd o dan un strategaeth ein gwaith ni i gyd ar leihau impact tlodi ar gyrhaeddiad. Felly, rydym ni wedi gallu cyplysu popeth oedd gyda ni, edrych a gwneud dadansoddiad manwl o beth oedd yn gweithio ar lefel dosbarth, ar lefel ysgol, ar y lefel mwy strategol o fewn awdurdod ac ar lefel rhanbarthol, ac edrych ar beth oedd yn fwyaf llwyddiannus.

Ms O'Connor: One of the things that we have done in the light of the Estyn report is to draw together under a single strategy all of our work on reducing the impact of poverty on attainment. Therefore, we've been able to bring all of the strands together and carry out a detailed study of what actually worked at the classroom level, on a school level, the more strategic level within an authority and also at a regional level, and look at what was most successful

[21] Rŷm ni hefyd wedi sylweddoli bod peth o'r gwaith roeddem ni'n ei wneud yn aflwyddiannus. Er enghraifft, gweithio o fewn ysgolion o amgylch y teulu, mae hynny wedi cael impact mawr mewn rhai o'n siroedd ni. Hefyd, wrth gwrs, edrych ar impact gwahanol fathau o dlodi, er enghraifft, mae'r math o dlodi rŷm ni'n ei weld ar hyd yr holl arfordir sydd gennym ni yn ERW yn wahanol iawn i'r tlodi, efallai, sydd o fewn cymunedau yn Nedd ac Afan yn ne'r rhanbarth. Felly, trio edrych yn fwy manwl, a rŷm ni nawr wedi comisiynu darn o waith ymchwil i'n helpu ni i baratoi'n well ar gyfer ymateb i anghenion plant unigol,

[22] **Simon Thomas:** Pan oeddem ni fel pwyllgor yn cynnal astudiaeth ar y mater hwn—y cyswllt rhwng cyrhaeddiad plant ac amddifadedd—ar y pryd, fe wnaeth Ceredigion ddod i mewn i roi tystiolaeth. Un o'r pethau a gafodd eu crybwyll yn y dystiolaeth honno ac a gafodd ei adlewyrchu yn adroddiad y pwyllgor oedd y ffaith bod Ceredigion yn gwneud llawer o waith i olrhain plentyn fesul un, ac yn mesur, mewn sawl maes, sut oedd y plentyn yn gwneud ac yn cyflawni ar draws y cwricwlwm, fel petai. Roedd hynny'n cael ei bortreadu fel enghraifft o arfer da, o gofio mai Ceredigion, wrth gwrs, oedd yr unig awdurdod addysg yng Nghymru a wnaeth gyrraedd y lefel o fod yn ardderchog. A yw hwn yn batrwm sydd wedi'i ddysgu o Geredigion ac sy'n cael ei ddefnyddio

We've also realised that some of the work we were doing wasn't particularly successful. For example, working within schools around the family; that's had a major impact in some of our counties. Also, of course, looking at the impact of different kinds of poverty, for example, the kinds of poverty we see along the whole coastal area in ERW is very different from the poverty, perhaps, that we see within the Neath and Afan communities in the south of the region. So, it's about looking in more detail and we've now commissioned a piece of research to help us to prepare more effectively for the needs of individual children.

Simon Thomas: When we as a committee carried out an inquiry into this area—the link between children's attainment and deprivation—at the time, Ceredigion came in to give evidence. One of the things that were mentioned during that evidence and was reflected in the committee's report, was that Ceredigion undertook considerable work to follow a child as an individual and it could measure, in many areas, how that child was doing and what their achievements were across the curriculum, as it were. That was something that was shown as an example of good practice, bearing in mind that Ceredigion, of course, is the only education authority in Wales that achieved a level of excellence. Has the Ceredigion pattern been emulated and is it in use more widely

ar draws y consortiwm nawr?

across the consortium now?

[23] **Mr E. Evans:** Un datblygiad rŷm ni wedi'i wneud bellach yw bod pedwar sir—. Jest i atgoffa pobl o beth roeddem ni'n trafod ar y pryd, rŷm ni wedi datblygu system fewnol o fewn Ceredigion, sef canolfan athrawon sydd yn edrych ar berfformiad pob disgybl unigol, ac rŷm ni'n medru torri data perfformiad i lawr i lefel disgybl, neu cohortau bychain o fewn grŵp blwyddyn, neu beth bynnag rŷm ni'n moyn ei wneud. Mae'r system electronig honno'n fyw ym Mhowys, sir Gâr a sir Benfro, ac rŷm ni'n gweithio gydag Abertawe a Neath Port Talbot ar hyn o bryd er mwyn i'r system fynd yn fyw yn fanna.

Mr E. Evans: One development that we have seen take place is that there are now four counties—. Just to remind people, what we're discussing at the moment, we have developed an internal system within Ceredigion, which is a teacher centre that looks at the performance of each individual pupil, and we can break down performance data to the pupil level, or small cohorts within a year group, or whatever we want to do. That electronic system is now live in Powys, Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire, and we're working with Swansea and Neath Port Talbot at present to ensure that the system is also implemented there.

[24] Beth mae'r wybodaeth honno'n ei rhoi i ni yw darlun clir a phendant i dargedu ymyrraeth lle mae'r angen mwyaf. Felly, pan rŷm ni'n siarad aboutu gwerth am arian am fuddsoddiad i mewn i unrhyw system yn y dyfodol, beth mae'r system yn ein galluogi ni i wneud yw dweud, 'Hyn a hyn o arian sydd gennym ar gael i'r math yma o gefnogaeth', ac yn hytrach na mynd i roi tamaid i bawb, rŷm ni nawr yn medru dilyn y strategaeth sydd wedi profi ei bod yn llwyddo, a'i dargedu i le mae'r angen mwyaf yn ein rhanbarth ni. Rŷm ni'n gweld tystiolaeth glir iawn o fewn y data eleni fod y cynnydd sydd wedi digwydd—a'r enghraifft rŷch chi wedi'i rhoi—wedi codi'n sylweddol

What that information provides us with is a clear and decisive picture so that we can target the intervention where's it's needed most. So, when we're talking about the value for money of any future investment in a system, what the system enables us to do is to think, 'Well, we know that we have so much funding available for this kind of support', and rather than spreading that out too thinly, we can actually follow a strategy, which is a proven success, and target it where the need is greatest within our region. We see very clear evidence in this year's data that the progress that's been made—and the example that you've given—has been significant across our region because of that methodology.

iawn ar draws ein rhanbarth ni oherwydd y fethodoleg honno.

[25] **Simon Thomas:** Diolch am hynny. Fy nghwestiwn olaf ar y maes hwn yw: pa mor allweddol yw categorioedd ysgolion yn y ffordd rŷm chi'n darparu cymorth i ysgolion? Hynny yw, a ydych chi ond yn darparu cymorth i rai coch ac oren, a ydych chi'n amrywio neu a ydych chi'n edrych ar hanes yr ysgol? Beth yw'r fethodoleg rydych chi'n ei defnyddio ynghylch categorioedd?

[26] **Ms O'Connor:** Mae gennym ni yn y rhanbarth ysgol gymorth a her, sy'n fframwaith i'n holl waith ni wrth i ni roi cymorth a her i ysgolion dros y flwyddyn. Mae'r fframwaith hwnnw wedi bod yn weithredol yn ERW ers, byddwn i'n dweud, efallai—cyn fy amser i—dair neu bedair blynedd. Rŷm ni'n ei fireinio bob blwyddyn, wrth ddysgu a gwella'n gwaith. Rŷm ni wedi datblygu hwnnw nawr i fatisio gyda'r system gategoreiddio. Rwy'n credu, beth rŷm ni, ambell waith, yn anghofio, ar lefel genedlaethol ac yn rhanbarthol, yw mai modd i ddarparu cymorth i ysgolion wella yw'r system gategoreiddio, nid ffordd o labelu ysgolion yn negyddol.

[27] Rŷm ni wedi gallu adeiladu'r ffordd rŷm ni'n categorioedd ysgolion i sicrhau ein bod yn rhoi'r cymorth a her sydd eu hangen arnyn nhw. Wedyn, wrth edrych yn fanwl ar beth yw eu *entitlement* nhw i'r cymorth y maen nhw'n ei gael yn ôl y

Simon Thomas: Thank you for that. My final question on this area is: how crucial is the categorisation of schools in the way that you provide support for schools? That is, do you just provide support to the red and amber schools, do you vary it, or do you look at the history of the schools? What methodology are you using in relation to categorisation?

Ms O'Connor: Within the region, we have a school support and challenge, which aids us in providing support for schools, and challenging them, throughout the year. That framework has been operational in ERW since, I would say—perhaps before my time—three or four years. We develop it on an annual basis and we learn lessons and improve. We have actually matched that with the categorisation system. I think, what we occasionally forget, at a national and regional level, is that the categorisation system is a means of enabling schools to improve rather than a way of negatively labelling schools.

We have been able to build on the way that we categorise schools to ensure that we do actually provide the support and challenge that they need. In looking in detail at what their entitlement is to the support that they receive according to their

categori y maen nhw'n ei dderbyn, rŷm ni wedyn yn gallu tracio'n fanwl impact y cymorth rŷm ni wedi'i roi iddyn nhw—her yw e ambell waith—a'r gwahanol fathau o ymyraethau rŷm ni'n gallu'u derbyn dros gyfnod. Ond, rŷm ni nawr mewn sefyllfa gref, rwy'n teimlo, i dracio impact hynny. Fe fyddwn ni, maes o law, efallai'n gallu ateb eich cwestiwn chi'n fwy hyderus a dweud, 'Ydym, rŷm ni wedi gallu symud ysgolion ymlaen dros gyfnod, trwy'r broses honno o liw i liw, wrth iddyn nhw gael llai a llai o gymorth, ac i ddod yn fwy hyderus eu hunain', achos dyna'r nod. O greu system, rwy'n credu ei bod wedi bod yn gam mawr i ni'n genedlaethol i symud oddi wrth y system fandio. Rwy'n teimlo ein bod ni, fel pedwar rhanbarth, wedi cydweithio'n agos â'r Llywodraeth i wneud hynny er mwyn galluogi ysgol i gael y cymorth sydd ei angen arnynt dros gyfnod. Felly, mae hwnnw'n fodel llawer mwy positif wrth inni weithio tuag at system hunanwella ar draws y wlad.

09:45

[28] **Mr E. Evans:** Rwy'n credu mai'r prif neges gyda chategoreiddio yw bod y system categoreiddio yno i adnabod ffordd o gefnogi ysgolion. Efallai fod angen inni gael y neges yna allan yn llawer mwy clir yn genedlathol—mai system o adnabod yr angen i gefnogi a lefel y gefnogaeth sydd ei hangen ar bob ysgol yn unigol yn y system. Mae e hefyd yn ffordd inni ymddiried yn ein

category, we can then track in detail the impact of the support that we have provided—it may be challenge occasionally—and the different kinds of interventions over a period of time. But we're now, I think, in a strong position to track the impact of that. In due course, we may be able to answer your question more confidently and say, 'Yes, we have been able to progress schools over a period of time through that process as they move from one category to another, as they receive less and less support and become more confident themselves', because that is the aim. In creating a system, I think it's been a major step at a national level to move away from banding. I think that we, as four regions, have worked closely with the Government to do that in order to enable schools to receive the support that they need over a period of time. So, that's a far more positive model as we work towards a self-improvement system across the country.

Mr E. Evans: I think that the main message about categorisation is that the categorisation system is there to identify a way of supporting schools. Perhaps we need to get that message out much more clearly on a national basis—that it's a system of identifying the need for support and the level of support each school needs within that system. It's also a way for us to trust in our best

hysgolion gorau ni. Pan fyddwn ni'n cyfuno ysgolion i weithio mewn partneriaethau o ba fath bynnag, rydym ni'n ymddiried ynddyn nhw gan roi'r adnodd iddyn nhw i reoli ar eu liwt ei hunain. Mae hynny'n rhoi mwy o otonomi iddyn nhw i fod yn fwy creadigol yn y ffordd y maen nhw'n symud ymlaen, ac mae hynny'n gwobrwyo'r ysgolion gorau hefyd, drwy ddweud, 'Mae yna werth ichi anelu at fod yn ysgol mor llwyddiannus ag y medrwch chi fod, achos rŷm ni'n ymddiried ynoch chi i'n cynorthwyo ni i fod yn rhan o bartneriaeth i dynnu pob ysgol drwyddo.'

[29] **Simon Thomas:** Roeddwn i jest eisiau gofyn cwestiwn atodol ar hynny achos rwy'n credu ei bod hi'n bwysig i ddeall ym mha ffordd rŷch chi'n sicrhau nad yw ysgolion sydd ar hyn o bryd yn cael eu gweld yn rhai llwyddiannus yn cael eu hamddifadu o gefnogaeth ac adnoddau dros gyfnod drwy switsio a rhoi cefnogaeth i ysgolion sydd yn goch ac oren ac ati. Mae'n amlwg na ddylai unrhyw ymdeimlad o wobrwyo methiant—dyna ffordd amrwd iawn o ddweud y peth, ond dyna beth sy'n digwydd os ŷch chi ddim yn ofalus—ddod yn rhan o'r system neu'r gyfundrefn. Felly, rydych chi'n hyderus bod yr ysgolion sydd yn llwyddo ar hyn o bryd hefyd yn cael y gefnogaeth angenrheidiol i barhau i lwyddo.

[30] **Mr E. Evans:** Rwy'n credu bod y

schools. When we bring schools together to work in a partnership of whatever kind, we trust in them by giving them the resource to manage things for themselves. That gives them greater autonomy to be more creative in the way that they move forward, and that rewards the best schools as well, by saying, 'It's worth your aiming to be as successful a school as possible, because we trust in you to help us to be part of a partnership that brings on every school.'

Simon Thomas: I have a supplementary question on that, because I think it's important to understand how you ensure that schools that are currently seen as successful are not deprived of support and resources over a period of time by switching support to the red or amber schools. It's clear that any perception of rewarding failure—that's a very crude way of putting it, but that is what will happen if you aren't careful—should not become part of the system. So, are you confident that the schools that are succeeding now also get the necessary support to maintain that success?

Mr E. Evans: I think that the phrase

ffras y gwnaethoch chi ei defnyddio, 'gwobrwyo methiant'—rŷm ni wedi cael cytundeb yn rhanbarthol fod yn rhaid inni symud i ffwrdd o'r hen ffordd yna o ariannu ysgolion. Hynny yw, os ydy ysgol yn dangos methiant, nid o angenrheidrwydd yr ateb yw taflu mwy a mwy a mwy o arian atyn nhw. Y ffordd orau y gallaf i ei disgrifio yw bod ambell ysgol yn cael trafferth i jyglo cwpwl o beli yn yr awyr, a'r peth diwethaf rŷch chi'n moyn gwneud yw taflu rhagor atyn nhw. Beth sydd eisiau ei wneud yw rhoi'r adnodd i'r ysgolion hynny sydd yn llwyddo ac sydd yn medru dangos bod y gallu ganddyn nhw i symud nid yn unig ei sefydliad eu hunain ymlaen ond i symud sefydliadau eraill ymlaen, a rhoi'r berchnogaeth iddyn nhw.

that you used, 'rewarding failure'— we have had regional agreement that we need to move away from that old way of funding schools. That is, if a school shows signs of failing, the answer may not necessarily be to throw more and more money at them. The best way that I have of describing it is that some schools have difficulty with juggling a few balls in the air, and the last thing you want to do is to throw more balls at them. What needs to be done is to give the resource to those schools that have succeeded and that have shown that they have the ability not only to move their own organisation forward, but to move other organisations forward, and to give them ownership.

[31] Mae'r fframwaith arolygu sydd gan Estyn hefyd yn cydnabod ac yn gwobrwyo'r ffordd yna o weithio, achos os ydy ysgol yn gallu dangos ei bod yn arwain sector, mae yna werth i'r ysgolion wedyn i dynnu ysgolion cyfagos ymlaen gyda nhw yn y ffordd yma. Felly, beth ŷm ni wedi cytuno fel rhanbarth yw peidio ariannu craidd y broblem, gan ddweud, 'Reit, cewch chi'r adnodd.' Rŷm ni'n rhoi'r adnodd i'r partner sydd yn mynd i allu eu cefnogi nhw, ac mae hwnnw'n feddylfryd newydd i'r rhanbarth ond mae'n talu ar ei ganfed.

The Estyn inspection framework also acknowledges and rewards that way of working, because if a school can show that it is sector leading, then there is a value for schools to draw neighbouring schools with them and bring them forward in the same way. So, what we have agreed as a region is to not fund the root of the problem, by saying, 'Right, you'll get the resource.' We give the resource to the partner that is going to be able to support them, and that is a new mindset for the region, but we are seeing it really pay off.

[32] **David Rees:** Keith Davies has a small supplementary.

[33] **Keith Davies:** Diolch, **Keith Davies:** Thank you, Chair. I read

Gadeirydd. Roeddwn i'n darllen yn y papur ddoe, a dweud y gwir, am danberfformio, mewn ffordd. Nid wyf yn gwybod os gwelsoch chi'r adroddiad ond roedd e'n cymharu ysgolion cyfrwng Cymraeg ag ysgolion eraill, ac roedd e'n dweud amser oeddech chi'n edrych ar y data—achos roeddech chi'n sôn bod data gennych chi ar y plant—ac yn edrych ar ganran y plant sy'n cael bwyd am ddim mewn ysgolion—. So, os ych chi'n cymharu'r ysgolion Saesneg â rhyw ganran â'r ysgolion cyfrwng Cymraeg â'r un ganran, mae'r ysgolion Cymraeg yn tanberfformio. A oeddech chi'n gwybod hynny ac a ydych chi'n edrych ar—? Beth ym ni'n sôn am yw gwella ysgolion yn y pen draw drwy edrych ar beth mae plant yn ei wneud. Yn ERW, a oeddech chi'n sylweddoli beth oedd y papur yn ei ddweud ddoe: bod yr ysgolion cyfrwng Cymraeg yn tanberfformio o'u cymharu â'r ysgolion Saesneg?

[34] **Ms O'Connor:** Rŷm ni yn ymwybodol o danberfformiad unrhyw ysgol ac yn aml rŷm ni yn ymwybodol bod yna rai ysgolion sydd ar yr olwg gyntaf yn edrych fel petasen nhw'n perfformio yn gymharol dda, ond, wrth eu cymharu nhw â'r ysgolion gorau yn yr un bandiau, eu bod nhw felly yn tanberfformio. Rŷm ni yn fwy na pharod ac wedi, yn y gorffennol, bod yn bod yn barod i ymgymryd â'r her yna. Rŷm ni wedi gweld, o fewn y rhanbarth, rhai ysgolion sy'n cwmpo i mewn i'r categori yna ych chi'n

in the newspaper yesterday about underperformance, in a way. I don't know whether you saw that particular article, but it compared Welsh-medium schools with other schools, and it stated that when you looked at the data—because you mentioned that you have data on the children—and looked at the percentage of children in receipt of free school meals—. So, if you compare the English-medium schools and the Welsh-medium schools with the same percentage, the Welsh-medium schools are underperforming. Were you aware of that and are you looking at—? What we're talking about here is school improvement, ultimately, by looking at pupil performance. In ERW, did you realise what the paper reported yesterday: that Welsh-medium schools were underperforming compared with English-medium schools?

Ms O'Connor: We are aware of the underperformance of any school and, quite often, we're aware that there are some schools that, on first sight, appear to be performing comparatively well, but when you compare them with the best schools in the same bands, you realise that they are underperforming. We are more than ready and have, in the past, been prepared to get to grips with that challenge. We have seen, within the region, some schools that fall into that category that you

disgrifio ac rŷm ni wedi gweld cynnydd sylweddol yn rhai ohonyn nhw yn y canlyniadau sydd newydd ddod. Rwy'n credu bod hynny oherwydd ein bod ni wedi gallu eu paru nhw gydag ysgolion eraill, ac efallai nid ysgolion yn yr un sector yn draddodiadol. Mae hynny'n rhywbeth, rwy'n credu, sy'n gryfder i ni fel rhanbarth, a hefyd, ar draws Cymru, rŷm ni wedi bod yn gweithio gyda rhanbarthau eraill er mwyn rhannu arfer gorau ar draws mwy nag un rhanbarth. Mae hynny'n galluogi ysgolion sydd efallai wedi bod mewn sefyllfa fwy cysurus, yn cydweithio â phobl tebyg iddynt, i gydweithio â phobl eraill, ac mae hynny'n agor drysau wrth rannu profiad ehangach. Rwy'n credu bod y system hunanwella yn ein galluogi i wneud hynny'n well.

[35] **Mr E. Evans:** Yr unig beth y byddwn i'n ei ddweud yn ychwanegol i'r hyn y mae Betsan newydd ei ddweud yw bod yn rhaid inni hefyd edrych ar ddefnydd y data sydd yn yr adroddiad, achos yn yr ysgolion yr ydych newydd eu disgrifio a'u categoreiddio, yn aml iawn mae'r gwir niferoedd yn fach iawn, lle mae'r canran yn awgrymu bod yna dipyn mwy. Oherwydd hynny, ambell waith pan mae'r niferoedd mor fach—. Mae yna enghreifftiau gennym mewn ysgolion unigol—mae yna un gen i yn benodol yng Ngheredigion lle gallaf ddweud wrthy, ydy, mae'r perfformiad yn edrych yn isel, ond mae'r garfan mor fach, mae dros dri

describe and we have seen significant progress in some of them in the results that have just come out. I think that that is because we've been able to pair them with other schools, and perhaps these are not schools in the same sector traditionally. I think that that is a strength of ours as a region, and also, nationally, we have been working with other regions in order to share best practice across more than one region. That enables schools that have perhaps been in a comfortable position, working with similar people, to work with other people, and that opens doors through sharing a broader experience. I think the self-improvement system has enabled us to do that better.

Mr E. Evans: The only thing I would add to Betsan's comments is that we must also look at the use of the data in that particular report, because in the schools that you've just described, very often the real numbers involved are very small, where the percentage figure suggests that it's a lot greater. As a result of that, when the numbers are so very small—. We do have examples in individual schools—I have a specific example in Ceredigion where I can tell you, yes, the performance looks to be poor, but the cohort involved is so small, over three quarters of those children are on the special needs register. It sounds terrible when you

chwarter y plant yna ar y gofrestr anghenion arbennig. Mae'n swnio'n erchyll pan ych chi'n rhoi canrannau, nes eich bod yn troi rownd a dweud mai dim ond pum plentyn ydynt. So, wrth ddadansoddi'r data yma, mae'n bwysig cael y darlun cyd-destunol i fynd ochr yn ochr â'r hyn y mae'r ganran yn ei ddweud.

give a percentage, until you turn round and say that that only amounts to five children. So, it's important to have the context to go with what the percentage tells you.

[36] **Keith Davies:** Diolch.

Keith Davies: Thanks.

[37] **David Rees:** Angela.

[38] **Angela Burns:** I'd like to flesh out a little bit more on the questions that Simon was asking you. So, how exactly do you go about challenging what used to be called a coasting school?

[39] **Ms O'Connor:** Each school in our region gets the same core entitlement to two core visits a year, as illustrated in the report that I mentioned earlier. So, we would treat every school equally in terms of that core entitlement. Then, depending on their bespoke needs, strengths and shortcomings, we would provide them with a bespoke package of support, and then following that support, that would be how they would be access the necessary challenge improvement—whatever they would need. It may be a tool that we provide them with, or a resource; it could be a challenge from another school, depending, obviously, on the exact situation. It can often be that some schools that are seen as coasting, they've been coasting for some time, and there are cultural issues within the school, and we have to look under the stone and look quite carefully at how we then unpick those and provide the school with a useful plan for improvement.

[40] **Mr E. Evans:** What's fortunate for us within the school is that we've got an agreement with the heads about sharing data, and that's a very powerful agreement to have, because, collectively as a group, they are more than happy for the challenge advice people to go in, and show them, 'Right, your current performance for your school looks like this, and this is the profile of performance for your school. This school is very similar to yours within the region and this is what their profile is, and as you can see, there are no major differences between you, and yet their trajectory of performance is greater than yours.' Being able to highlight those kind of shortcomings, and identify

the fact that they are coasting—we don't use the word 'coasting', but what we do illustrate to them is that there is headroom for improvement. Being able to have that dialogue, again, I think is down to the partnership that we've got with our heads, and the mutual trust and respect. We wouldn't take those data outside of that arena and publicly run those things, but having that agreement internally to be able to say to one another, 'This is just not good enough, because compared to this neighbouring school, you should be performing like this', gives a very powerful tool for us to be able to engage in that kind of dialogue. Over a period of time, that mutual trust and respect has grown within the region and I think it's paying dividends, especially, as I said at the beginning, with our current-year performance data, which are unverified at the moment, but are looking pretty healthy.

[41] **Angela Burns:** I think that's why I'm challenging you so hard on this point—it was a very bullish statement with which you opened up the evidence session, saying that you believe that the improvement in grades was pretty much entirely down to the working of ERW. I will say that I haven't been out to a school in the past six months for various reasons. However, before that I visited an awful lot of schools within the region, and I have to say there was a relatively significant number of headteachers who said they'd had either little or no interface at all with ERW, particularly in the primary sector. So, my questions are: do you treat primary and secondary equally? And this wonderful methodology that you've been speaking of, this system, which is obviously in place now—how long has that been in place? As I say, this time last year, there were an awful lot of headteachers who were telling me that they hadn't had a visit from ERW, hadn't had any discussions or anything like that. With one teacher or two teachers, you might just say, 'Oh, well, that's them being a bit tricky', but it was more than just a few.

[42] **Mr E. Evans:** I think part of the issue that we had at the time was the way that the region is constituted; we have a collective agreement between all six authorities and we have 58 full-time equivalent challenge advisers employed across the region. Betsan made reference earlier to the huge geographical area we cover collectively as a body, and what we deliberately and consciously decided upon was to create hubs rather than a single regional approach, because we didn't want our challenge advisers spending three or four hours travelling in one direction to go to one school. They'd spend more time in the car than they would—. In order to do that, we've broken it down into locally employed individuals working over a regional strategy. The perception out there then was that, because they were locally employed: 'Yes, we've had our local visitors coming in from the local

authority; we haven't had anybody from ERW yet', without realising that they're one and the same people. For schools challenge, the challenge adviser team are the ERW team, but in some schools it was just a perception about understanding who that person was and what badge they were wearing.

[43] It was significantly to do with getting people to understand what ERW is all about. Betsan and the team have spent a huge amount of time making sure that there's clarity around that in the region. I would hope that that message wouldn't be the same message if you went out to schools today.

[44] **Ms O'Connor:** I think that, in the past 12 months, we've done a lot of work on communication, and we've brought about system change in the way we support schools as well as our communication improving at the same time. So, I think you should see now that they would recognise across all our schools that they understand that there is no duplication; there are no local authority advisory services and ERW—that we're all one and the same. I think that they can now see that they are part of that co-operative-type movement, and that heads are part of that as well. Sometimes, some of the elected members use the term 'the ERW family'. We're all in there with the same aim, which is to raise standards for children—that's the bottom line for us all—and that we're all working towards this common goal under this single strategy that Eifion pointed to earlier.

[45] **Angela Burns:** Given the size of the region, do you actually think it is too big? Do you think we should have five regional consortia rather than four? I know that there's at least one other regional consortium that has an enormous geographical spread. Is it unwieldy? You know, is it very unwieldy trying to manage that distance?

[46] **Ms O'Connor:** There are solutions. I think there are solutions. If we worked in a different geographical area, we would use different solutions, so I think we use different solutions to some of the smaller regions in order to get communication to work, in order to reduce travel time, in order to get the support the schools need. So, we maybe use, on occasion, different strategies to those maybe some of the other regions can use. So, we look at solutions, and I think some of those local authorities are not just rural today; they were rural last year, they were rural 10 years ago, so they've built strategies to work in those kinds of communities. So, we're learning from that and using those strategies as well and, I think, as effectively as we can.

[47] **Angela Burns:** In your paper, you refer to a strong temporary workforce of challenge advisers—

[48] **Ms O'Connor:** The translation there was 'transient' rather than 'temporary'.

[49] **Angela Burns:** Right.

[50] **Ms O'Connor:** Our challenge advisers have changed. What they look like, I think in the past three to four years, has changed. Therefore, rather than being permanent employees of a single local authority, where you could have a teacher, sometimes close to retirement, coming out of the system; maybe we need to move them on; they go to work for the local authority—that tradition has certainly stopped in our region. So, now, roughly a third of the workforce is made up of full-time employees. For continuity, we do need some core staff. There's another third that are seconded headteachers or senior school leaders who, again, bring that currency into the workforce and make sure that the best people are in there. They've got current practice from schools, they're fresh, they're recent and relevant—that's how it's referred to in the challenge adviser standards. Then, we've got another third who are maybe consultants or people we use on a part-time basis, again, coming in from the schools to build the expertise and capacity we've got. So, it's not temporary, it's transient, yes? So, over time, they go back to school, take the expertise back to school, because I don't want a team of advisers sitting behind desks in our offices wherever they would be across the region. We need the expertise back in schools so we're building resilient schools that can self-improve, ultimately, by building capacity over time through making that transient workforce work for us.

10:00

[51] **Angela Burns:** Do all your teaching challenge advisers—the ones who come out of schools—come from schools that are either green or have had outstanding Estyn reports, or are you using people who've perhaps faced a challenge themselves?

[52] **Mr E. Evans:** There's a combination there. It is important that—. That's an example of how I wouldn't want categorisation to be used. Categorisation is a tool to determine what kind of resources a supported school can access. Within those environments there are schools that are in a red category because, if you look at the second grade on the bottom axis, that's to do

with a number of factors, which could include the fact that a school would fall into the amber, or even the red category if they've got a new leadership team. That doesn't mean that the leadership team in that school is underperforming; it means they're new. Collectively, what we want to do, as a region, is make sure that we are there to support that new team, embed their new practices, and be aware of good practice that exists around the consortium in its totality. What is important—and the point that Betsan made is vital here—. Historically, what was failing in the system previously, before the creation of consortia, was the fact that we had school improvement officers who were in post for 10, 15 or 20 years, and when those individuals were going into schools, the issue around currency was a real one. So, headteachers were saying, 'Do you realise what it's like on a day-to-day basis, delivering these policies when you're bringing new policies to the table?' What we have now is a mix of the experience of being in a system that has co-funded core staff, and also those people who know first-hand how difficult it is, or how effective it is, to implement new policies and new strategies and are able to empathise with the people who are on the ground today, knowing what they're facing.

[53] I think, as well, within our arrangements—and I have to pay a compliment to Estyn here as well—some of the development programmes that Estyn run for their staff we take full advantage of within ERW, because of the professional development opportunities that they get. Our focus, as Betsan said earlier, is learner outcomes. Everything that drives us in our region is about improved learner outcomes. If you can have a training programme, which Estyn provides, which makes people focus on standards and learner outcomes, that benefits us as a central team. When they go back, then, from their secondments into their individual schools, they think about standards in their schools as well, and that impacts very positively on how they—

[54] **Angela Burns:** But there are real mixed messages. I'm not going to name this particular school, but it is a school that deals with an awful lot of severely disadvantaged young people. They were put on report by Estyn a couple of years ago and the new head has worked his socks off dragging that school up. And Estyn had just taken them off report, basically, and said, 'You're doing good'. When the colours came out, they were put into the red. That school's morale is absolutely on the floor because it's just like, 'Every time we achieve one set of goals, along come another bunch of people who tell us there's another set of goals that we've failed'. Yet all the goals, allegedly, are all about the same things: school improvement. Now, you're

either improving a school or you're not. One group of people says, 'Yes; you've done it. Well done. Tick. Off you go', and then along come another lot who say, 'Actually, no, you're not. You're failing on the dashboard, and on this, that and the other.' It must be incredibly difficult to be a head of a school these days.

[55] **Mr E. Evans:** Certainly.

[56] **David Rees:** I'm conscious of time and we still have a long way to go.

[57] **Angela Burns:** Please don't let them off the hook on this, though.

[58] **David Rees:** A short answer.

[59] **Mr E. Evans:** I'll be as short as I can on this. Part of the reason why that occurred previously—and we had anomalies like this across Wales in all four of our regions—is there was an indicator on the second judgment call within the categorisation model that should have been sitting in stage 1 because it was a data measure, and it was around the eligibility for free school meals performance against the level 2 inclusive benchmark. Now, once that judgment call was set at that level, the guidelines stated quite clearly that a school would automatically drop two categories, which would give the perception then that, despite whatever the head had done, they would—. Welsh Government officials have worked closely with us at a national level on this issue. That particular indicator now has been moved to stage 1. So, that sits nicely and neatly in stage 1, where it should have been from the outset. Stage 2 will enable now greater discretion to be able to recognise that individual headteacher's contribution, and the school's contribution to those learner outcomes, and it won't be detrimental to the school. So, it was a glitch in the first part of categorisation, which has been ironed out this year.

[60] **David Rees:** Aled.

[61] **Aled Roberts:** Mae'r **Aled Roberts:** The Government tells Llywodraeth yn dweud wrthym bod us that there's a national model in yna fodel cenedlaethol o ran y terms of the consortia. I think that consortia. Rwy'n meddwl mai beth yr what we're trying to understand is ydym ni'n trio ei ddeall ydy'r the difference in terms of gwahaniaeth o ran trefniadau. Rydych arrangements. You've already talked eisoes wedi sôn am eich staffio a bod about your staffing and that a third un rhan o dair yn gweithio i'r work for the local authorities, a third

awdurdodau lleol, un rhan o dair sydd ar secondiad, ac un rhan o dair sy'n ymgynghorwyr. Felly, faint o'ch staff eich hunain sy'n cael eu cyflogi gan ERW?

[62] **Ms O'Connor:** Yn ganolog, pedwar.

[63] **Mr E. Evans:** Os gwnaf ei esbonio'n ofalus, beth rŷm ni wedi'i greu, er mwyn gwasanaethu anghenion y model cenedlaethol—mae angen 58 ymgynghorydd her arnom ni. Nawr, wrth dorri hynny i lawr ymhellach, rŷm ni'n gwybod bod angen mwy o ymgynghorwyr her arnom ni i wasanaethu ysgolion yn yr *hub* yn y dwyrain nag yn yr *hub* yn y gogledd, oherwydd natur ddaearyddol wledig y gogledd. Felly, beth rŷm ni wedi'i greu yw fformiwlâ sydd yn caniatáu'r hyblygrwydd yna i benodi staff yn lleol er mwyn dilyn strategaeth gorfforaethol ERW.

[64] **Aled Roberts:** Beth rwy'n trio ei ddeall yw a oes gyda ni gorff rhanbarthol yma, neu a oes gyda ni rhyw fath o gorff sydd fel un ymbarél ar gyfer y chwe awdurdod lleol. Dyna beth sydd yn anodd i mi ei ddeall o'r tu allan i'r rhanbarth. Mae tystiolaeth sydd yn dweud nad oeddech, tan eleni, yn rhannu data—dim ond efo'r ysgolion o fewn yr awdurdodau lleol, er enghraifft, er bod hynny wedi newid eleni. Roeddech yn sôn am un strategaeth eleni ar gyfer y plant mwyaf difreintiedig, sy'n awgrymu, felly, bod yna chwe strategaeth cyn

who are on secondment, and a third who are advisers. So, how many of your own staff are employed by ERW?

Ms O'Connor: Centrally, four.

Mr E. Evans: If I explain it carefully, what we have created, in order to serve the needs of the national model—we need 58 challenge advisers. Now, in breaking that down further, we know that we need more challenge advisers to serve schools in the hub in the east than we need in the hub in the north, because of the geographical rural nature of the north. So, what we've created is a formula that allows that flexibility to appoint staff locally in order to follow ERW's corporate strategy.

Aled Roberts: What I'm trying to understand is whether we have this regional body, or whether we have a kind of umbrella body for the six local authorities. That is what's difficult for me to understand from outside the region. There is evidence that states that, until this year, you didn't share data—only with the schools within the local authorities, for example, although that has changed this year. You talked about one strategy this year for the most disadvantaged children, which suggests, therefore, that there were

hynny. Mae'r ffaith eich bod yn dweud mewn rhai siroedd eich bod yn gwneud gwaith teuluol yn awgrymu—. Felly, ble mae'r penderfyniadau a'r cyfrifoldeb yn eistedd yma? I ryw raddau, a ydych chi fel rheolwr cyffredinol yn dibynnu ar benderfyniadau'n cael eu gwneud gan awdurdod lleol, neu a oes gyda chi'r hawl i ddweud, 'Wel, dyma beth rwyf eisiau ei wneud'?

[65] Roeddwn i'n ymwneud â'r gogledd pan roeddem yn setio hyn i fyny, ac rwy'n meddwl mai un o'r rhwystredigaethau oedd gennym ni oedd bod yn rhaid i chi, i ryw raddau, dderbyn penderfyniad gan awdurdod, ac, i ryw raddau, bod eich *pace* chi'n dibynnu ar ba un sydd fwyaf araf.

[66] **Mr E. Evans:** Efallai y rhoddaf yr esboniad llawn. Mae gennym ni gydbwyllgor sydd yn goruchwyllo gwaith ERW yn ei gyfanrwydd. Y cynghorydd Alun Thomas sy'n cadeirio, wedyn mae Mark James, prif weithredwr Caerfyrddin, yn eistedd ar y bwrdd. Rwyf innau yn eistedd arno wedyn fel y cyfarwyddwr â chyfrifoldeb i arwain ar draws y rhanbarth, ac mae aelodau etholedig ar draws y chwe sir yn eistedd ar yr un rhan o'r bwrdd â ni. Mae'r prif weithredwyr eraill, a'r cyfarwyddwyr eraill hefyd, wedi'u dirprwyo i fod yn rhan o'r trafodaethau. Mae Betsan wedyn yn rhoi strategaethau a pholisïau o flaen y bwrdd ac mae'r bwrdd yn penderfynu wedyn os ydyn nhw'n hapus neu beidio gyda'r

six strategies before that. The fact that you say that in some counties you carry out family work suggests—. So, where do the decisions and responsibilities sit here? To some extent, do you as the managing director depend on the decisions being made by a local authority, or do you have the right to say 'Well, this is what I want to do'?

I used to deal with north Wales when this was being set up, and I believe that one of the frustrations we had was that you had to, to some extent, accept a decision by an authority, and that, to some extent, your pace was dependent on the one that's the slowest.

Mr E. Evans: Perhaps I'll give the full explanation. We do have a joint committee, which oversees the work of ERW in its entirety. Councillor Alun Thomas chairs that, and then Mark James, the chief executive of Carmarthenshire, sits on the board. I sit on it as director with responsibility to lead across the region, and we do have elected members from across all six counties who sit on the same part of the board as us. The other chief executives, and the other directors also, have been delegated to be part of the discussions. Betsan presents strategies and policies to that board and the board then decides whether it is happy or not with the direction of travel we are suggesting. Once

cyfeiriad rŷm ni'n ei grybwyll. Unwaith mae'r bwrdd yn cytuno i hwnnw, Betsan sy'n gyrru'r agenda yna yn gyfan gwbl ar draws y chwe sir, ac rŷm ni'n ymrwymo i gydweithio i'r cyfeiriad strategol yna.

[67] **Aled Roberts:** Ydy'r bwrdd yn gallu ei dderbyn, neu a oes rhaid i'r bwrdd ei gyfeirio yn ôl at yr awdurdod lleol iddyn nhw ei gadarnhau?

[68] **Mr E. Evans:** Os ydym yn siarad am enghreifftiau penodol—. Dim ond i roi enghraifft i chi nawr—os ŷm ni'n siarad am strategaeth o ran ymyrraeth mewn ysgol, mae'r bwrdd yn derbyn bod Betsan yn gweithredu a bod dim angen mynd nôl ato. Os ydym yn siarad aboutu bolisi sydd yn pontio a rhoi cysondeb ar draws y chwe sir, er enghraifft tâl ac amodau athrawon, yna mae'n rhaid mynd yn ôl trwy'r broses ddemocrataidd leol. Ond nid yw hynny'n gorwedd o fewn y model cenedlaethol; mae'n rhywbeth ychwanegol rŷm ni'n dod i'r bwrdd, achos rŷm ni'n gweld budd ehangach. Mae'r model cenedlaethol o bosib braidd yn gyfyng ac yn gul o ran ei ddiffiniad o wella ysgolion. Yn fy marn bersonol i, dylai unrhyw gyfeiriad tuag at wella ysgolion gynnwys pethau fel anghenion arbennig a chynhwysiant, achos mae'r elfennau yna yn allweddol bwysig i godi safonau.

that's agreed by the board, it's Betsan who drives that agenda entirely across the six counties, and we commit to work jointly to that strategic direction.

Aled Roberts: Can the board accept that, or does the board have to send it back to the local authority for them to confirm it?

Mr E. Evans: If we're talking about specific examples—. Just to give you an example—if we're talking about a strategy on school intervention, the board would accept that Betsan would implement that and that there would be no need to go back to that. If we're talking about a policy that provides transition and consistency across the six counties, for example teachers' pay and conditions, we have to go back through the local democratic process. But that doesn't sit within the national model; it's something else that we're bringing to the board, because we see a wider benefit. The national model is perhaps a little restrictive and narrow in terms of its definition of school improvement. In my personal opinion, any reference to school improvement should include things such as special needs and inclusion, because all those elements are crucially important to raise standards.

[69] Gwnaethoch chi hefyd sôn am

You also mentioned the challenge in

yr her gyda data. Oedd, roedd gyda ni her fawr gyda data, nid o ran diffyg dymuniad i rannu data, ond roedd yn rhaid bod yn ofalus iawn gyda'r protocolau diogelu data. Byddai rhaid i unrhyw un awdurdod fod yn hollol glir ac yn gadarn eu meddyliau nad ydyn nhw'n torri unrhyw reolau wrth rannu data. Felly, mae wedi cymryd tipyn o amser inni, fel rhanbarth, i wneud yn siŵr bod y protocolau sydd gyda ni yn cydymffurfio'n gyfreithiol â'r hawliau i rannu data.

[70] **Aled Roberts:** Onid yw pob sir yn rhannu'r data hynny efo Llywodraeth Cymru, felly beth ydy'r gwahaniaeth efo—

[71] **Mr E. Evans:** Y gwahaniaeth yw, y mae'r data rŷch chi'n siarad amdanynt ar lefel gymharol uchel. Rŷm ni'n siarad am berfformiad awdurdod ac o bosibl aboutu berfformiad ysgolion. Nid ydym yn mynd o dan hynny.

[72] O fewn ein rhanbarth ni, rŷm ni'n mynd i lawr i lefel disgybl, a dyna'r prif wahaniaeth. Pan rŷm ni'n siarad aboutu a oes consyrn am danberfformiad, rŷm ni'n siarad aboutu tanberfformiad unigolyn o fewn y system ac nid am danberfformiad ysgol neu danberfformiad awdurdod. Rŷm ni moyn mynd lawr ag ef i'r haen nesaf a dyna le mae'r cymhlethdodau cyfreithiol yn dod i mewn i'r hafaliad, pan rŷm ni'n edrych ar hwnnw.

terms of data. Yes, we had a major challenge with data, not in terms of a lack of desire to share data, but we had to be very careful with data protection protocol. Any one authority must be entirely clear that they are not breaking any rules and regulations when sharing data. Therefore, it has taken quite some time for us, as a region, to ensure that the protocols that we have in place do comply legally with data protection issues.

Aled Roberts: Doesn't every council share that data with the Welsh Government, so what's the difference with—

Mr E. Evans: The difference is that you're talking about data at a relatively high level. We're talking about the performance of authorities and possibly the performance of schools. We don't go below that.

Within our region, we go down to the pupil level and that is the main difference. When we talk about whether there is concern regarding about underperformance, we're talking about the underperformance of an individual within the system and not the underperformance of a school or an authority. We want to take it down to that lowest level and that is where the legal complications come into the equation, when we are looking at that.

[73] **Aled Roberts:** Felly, beth yw strwythur ariannu GwE? A oes gennych gyllideb ganolog ac ai chi sy'n gyfrifol am benderfynu ar wariant? Ac a ydy'r awdurdodau—

Aled Roberts: So, what is the financial structure of GwE? Do you have a central budget and are you then responsible for deciding on expenditure?

[74] **David Rees:** You mean ERW.

[75] **Aled Roberts:** ERW, sori.

Aled Roberts: ERW, sorry.

[76] **Mr E. Evans:** Well i fi beidio â siarad am GwE. [*Chwerthin.*]

Mr E. Evans: I'd better not talk about GwE. [*Laughter.*]

[77] **Aled Roberts:** Mae'r gogledd yn awyddus i fod yn rhan o bopeth.

Aled Roberts: The north is keen to be involved in everything here.

[78] **Mr E. Evans:** Ie, rhanbarthau'n mynd yn llai, ddim yn fwy. [*Chwerthin.*]

Mr E. Evans: Yes, the regions will be getting smaller, not larger. [*Laughter.*]

[79] **Aled Roberts:** Beth sy'n digwydd? A oes gennych chi gyllideb ganolog yn ERW?

Aled Roberts: What happens? Do you have a central budget in ERW?

[80] **Ms O'Connor:** Mae yna gyllideb ganolog ac y mae cyllideb sy'n dod mewn i ERW sy'n cael ei rhannu ar draws y chwe awdurdod.

Ms O'Connor: There is a central budget and a budget that comes into ERW, which is then distributed across the six authorities.

[81] **Mr E. Evans:** Y gyfundrefn sydd gyda ni—

Mr E. Evans: The system that we have—

[82] **Aled Roberts:** Beth yw eich cyllideb ganolog chi?

Aled Roberts: What is your central budget?

[83] **Ms O'Connor:** Rŷch chi wedi rhoi fi ar y *spot*—ni allaf ateb.

Ms O'Connor: You're putting me on the spot there—I can't answer.

[84] **David Rees:** I'm very happy for you to write to us to let us know, if you can.

[85] **Mr E. Evans:** Ond beth sy'n bwysig i'w nodi yw bod gennym ni un awdurdod sydd yn cymryd y cyfrifoldeb o reoli'r arian yn gyfan gwbl. Mae'r cyfarwyddwr cyllid yn sir Benfro wedyn yn chwarae rôl ar ran y rhanbarth fel y swyddog 151 ar gyfer y rheolaeth ariannol yn ogystal. Cyfrifoldeb y cyfarwyddwr hwnnw wedyn yw mynychu'r cyd-bwyllgor a rhoi adroddiadau tymhorol i'r cyd-bwyllgor am berfformiad ariannol y rhanbarth. Ar faint y gyllideb rŷm ni'n ei rheoli, mae'r grantiau sy'n dod mewn i'r rhanbarth yn ryw £70 miliwn y flwyddyn. Nawr, mae hwnnw'n swm sylweddol iawn. Mae'r arian hwnnw wedyn yn cael ei ddefnyddio'n gyfan gwbl ar gyfer strategaethau cefnogaeth, ymyrraeth a her yn ein strategaeth ni.

[86] Byddai Betsan yn gyfrifol am reoli a chyfeirio'r arian hwnnw, yn ôl yr angen, ar draws y cwbl. Ond un awdurdod sydd yn rheoli hwnnw nawr, sef sir Benfro, ar ran y cyd-bwyllgor ac o ran y cytundeb o fewn ERW.

[87] **Aled Roberts:** Mae'r grantiau, felly, yn cael eu talu i'r awdurdodau lleol, ydyn nhw?

[88] **Mr E. Evans:** Na. Maen nhw'n mynd yn uniongyrchol i un awdurdod.

[89] **Ms O'Connor:** Rwy'n credu bod hwn yn rhywbeth cymhleth a rŷm ni

Mr E. Evans: But what's important to note is that we have one authority that takes responsibility for managing the money in its entirety. The finance director from Pembrokeshire will then play a role in terms of region as the 151 officer for the financial management as well. That director then has the responsibility of attending the joint committee and giving seasonal reports to the joint committee about the financial performance of the region. On the size of the budget that we manage, the grants that come in to the region are around £70 million per year. Now, that is a very significant sum. That money is then used entirely for support, intervention and challenge strategies, according to our strategy.

Betsan would be responsible for managing and directing that money, according to need, across the region. But one authority manages that now, namely Pembrokeshire, on behalf of the joint committee and on behalf of the agreement within ERW.

Aled Roberts: The grants, therefore, are paid to the local authorities, are they?

Mr E. Evans: No. They go directly to one authority.

Ms O'Connor: I think that this is a complex issue and we have spent a

wedi treulio lot fawr o amser yn trio egluro ein system lywodraethu i Estyn, i'r Llywodraeth ac yn fewnol, ac y mae hwnnw'n rhan o'r pwynt cyfathrebu yr oedd Angela yn cyfeirio ato gynnu. Mae'r ffordd rŷm ni'n gweithio yn wahanol ac nid wyf yn credu y buasai'n gweithio inni petai gyda ni un tîm canolog. Felly, rŷm ni'n sicrhau bod yr atebolrwydd democrataidd yn eistedd o hyd ymhob awdurdod lleol. Felly, mae'n rhaid inni weithio o fewn y system yna ac rwy'n credu bod yna werth ychwanegol hefyd—nid oes dyblygu o gwbl o fewn y rhanbarth. Rŷm ni hefyd yn gallu rhoi gwerth ychwanegol wrth inni fynd y tu hwnt i ffiniau model cenedlaethol, pan rŷm ni'n edrych ar gymorth lefel teulu i ddisgyblion. Hefyd, mae'r cyfarwyddwr wedi cydweithio ar sicrhau bod cyfraddau presenoldeb yn codi—eto, y tu allan i'r model cenedlaethol. Felly, mae'n ein galluogi ni i wneud yn fawr o'r adnoddau sydd gyda ni o fewn y chwe awdurdod ac nid dim ond yn ganolog fel un corff, fel ERW.

great deal of time trying to explain our governance system to Estyn, to the Government and internally, and that is related to the communication point that Angela referred to earlier. The way that we work is different and I don't think it would work for us if we had one central team. Therefore, we do ensure that democratic accountability sits within each local authority. Therefore, we have to work within that system and I do think that there is some added value—there is no duplication at all within the region. We can also provide added value by going beyond the boundaries of the national model, when we look at family level support for pupils. Also, the director has collaborated in ensuring that attendance rates improve—again, that is outwith the national model. Therefore, it enables us to make the most of the resources that we have within the six authorities and not only centrally as a single body, namely ERW.

[90] **David Rees:** We've moved into governance and national models and we have other questions from other Members on those.

[91] **Aled Roberts:** Un cwestiwn olaf, felly, gennyf i: mae Estyn yn feirniadol o'r consortia o ran eu hunanasesu ac yn dweud eich bod chi'n barod iawn i nodi cryfderau, ond ddim mor barod i ddweud beth ydy'ch gwendidau chi. O ran eich tystiolaeth chi, eto mae'n

Aled Roberts: I have one final question, therefore: Estyn is critical of the consortia in terms of their self-assessment and it says that you're very willing to note your strengths, but not as prepared to say what your weaknesses are. In terms of your evidence, again it

canolbwyntio—ac hwyrach buaswn i'n disgwyl i chi wneud hyn—ar eich cryfderau chi, ond beth ydy'ch gwendidau chi o gymharu efo consortia eraill?

[92] **Ms O'Connor:** Nid wyf yn siŵr beth ydyn nhw o gymharu gyda chonsortia eraill, ond rwy'n credu bod ein gwendidau ni'n debyg iawn i'r heriau sydd gyda ni ar gefn ein papur. Maen nhw'n heriau, nid i'r Llywodraeth, ond i ni i gyd. Rwy'n credu, o ran yr heriau rŷm ni'n cyfeirio atyn nhw fan hyn, rŷm ni'n sôn am gyfathrebu effeithiol; mae'n rhaid inni gyfathrebu â phawb, athrawon ar lefel dosbarth a phenaethiaid, a chyfathrebu â'n rhanddeiliaid ni.

10:15

[93] Rwy'n credu bod cyfathrebu yn rhywbeth hollbwysig i wneud yn siŵr bod y negeseuon ar newid y system yn dod drosodd.

[94] Categoriad—rŷm ni wedi trafod eisoes y bore yma bod *issues* o hyd o ran cyfathrebu. Felly, rŷm ni'n gweithio'n galed ar hynny. Mae'n disgwyliadau ni hefyd yn uchel o fewn y system. Ar y disgwyliadau sydd nawr ar ein hymgyngorwyr ni, rŷm ni wedi codi'r bar, yn sicr. Mae'r math o her a'r math o gefnogaeth rŷm ni'n disgwyl iddyn nhw eu rhoi i ysgolion o'r radd flaenaf. Felly, rwy'n credu bod sicrhau ein bod yn gallu delifro i'r disgwyliadau uchel yna yn

concentrates—and perhaps I'd expect you to do that—on your strengths, but what are your weaknesses, compared with other consortia?

Mr O'Connor: I'm not sure what they are in comparison with other consortia, but I think our weaknesses are very similar to the challenges that we set out on at the back of our paper. They are challenges not just for Government, but for us all. I think, in terms of the challenges that we refer to, we are talking about effective communication; we have to communicate with everyone, teachers at classroom level and headteachers, and our stakeholders.

I think communication is a crucially important issue to ensure that those messages about changes to the system are conveyed effectively.

Categorisation—we have already discussed this morning that there are still issues in terms of communication. Therefore, we are working hard on that. Our expectations are also very high within the system. On the expectations on our challenge advisors, we've certainly raised the bar. The kind of challenge and the kind of support we expect them to provide to schools is of the highest order. To ensure that we are able to

un o'n heriau mawr.

deliver to those high expectations is one of our major challenges.

[95] Rwy'n credu y gwnaeth Simon godi gynnau hefyd fod codi'r disgwyliadau—rŷm ni'n dechrau mewn man cryf. Felly, mae sicrhau'r camau nesaf a'u cadw'n gyson yn her fawr i ni. Hefyd, mae sicrhau bod y farn broffesiynol rŷm ni'n ei wneud wrth alluogi ysgolion i wella yn holl bwysig, a sicrhau ein bod yn gallu dibynnu ar farn ein hathrawon wrth iddynt asesu gwaith plant, a'n bod yn gallu sicrhau barn ein hymgynghorwyr wrth inni wneud barn ar ysgolion, a bod barn Estyn hefyd yn un hyderus. Felly, mae hynny i gyd yn her i ni, i sicrhau bod gennym gysondeb ac integriti clir, a dilysrwydd i'r barnau hynny.

I think Simon raised the point earlier that enhancing the expectations—we are starting from a strong point. Therefore, ensuring that we do make progress and consistently make progress is another major challenge. Also, ensuring that our professional advice on school improvement is crucially important, and ensuring that we can rely on our teachers' opinions when they assess children's work, and that we can rely on our advisors' opinions, and that Estyn's opinions are also assured. That is all a challenge for us, to ensure that we have clear consistency and integrity, and authenticity for those opinions.

[96] A, hefyd, mae dilyn ein strategaeth. Mae ein strategaeth yn hollol *focused*, fel rŷm ni wedi dweud, ar ddeilliannau a sicrhau'r gwerth gorau am arian ar lefel dosbarth i'r plant, a sicrhau ein bod yn ymladd at 'da neu well' i'r plant i gyd, ar bob lefel yn y system. Mae cadw at hynny, beth bynnag yw'r *white noise* sydd y tu fas i'r system, yn her inni hefyd wrth inni gadw ymlaen. Felly, rŷm yn hollol ymwybodol fel rhanbarth fod ein prosesau gwarantu ansawdd a hunanasesu yn cael eu bwydo'n barhaus dros galendr y flwyddyn. Wrth fynd dan groen y data, rŷm ni'n hollol ymwybodol o lle mae ein pethau problemus ar lefel ysgol, ar

Also, following our strategy is crucial. Our strategy is entirely focused, as we have said, on outcomes and ensuring best value for money at the classroom level for children, and ensuring that we fight for 'good or excellent' for all children at all levels within the system. Whatever the white noise may be outside the system, sticking to that is also a challenge for us as we go forward. So, we are entirely aware as a region that our quality assurance and self-evaluation processes are continually looked at throughout the year. In getting to grips with those data, we're entirely aware of where the problems exist at a school level, subject level, and theme level. If we

lefel pwnc, a hefyd themâu. Rwy'n credu, petawn yn mynd i'r afael â rhai o'r dogfennau sydd gennym ar lefel rhanbarth, byddech yn gweld bod y cynnydd a'r ffordd y mae ein prosesau wedi esblygu dros y 18 mis diwethaf wedi bod yn heriol tu hwnt o ran hunanasesu.

actually got to grips with some of the documents that we have at a regional level, then you would see that the progress and the way that our processes have evolved over the past 18 months have been extremely challenging in terms of self-evaluation.

[97] **David Rees:** Keith, we're time conscious, so a couple of questions only.

[98] **Keith Davies:** O ran llywodraethu'r consortia, tri chwestiwn cyflym. Mae'r swyddfa archwilio yn gofyn sut rydych yn rheoli cyllid. Yn eich adroddiad, rydych yn sôn bod dirprwyo i ysgolion yn uchel iawn yn ERW. Rwyf eisiau gwybod beth mae hynny'n meddwl.

Keith Davies: In terms of governance of the consortia, I have three quick questions. The audit office asks about the way that you manage finance. In your report, you say that delegating to schools is very high in ERW. I want to understand what that means.

[99] Yr ail beth yw gweithio gyda'r awdurdodau. Yr awdurdodau sydd â hawl cyfreithiol am addysg ac mae'r swyddfa archwilio yn sôn efallai nad oes digon o drafod gyda'r pwyllgorau craffu yn yr awdurdodau.

Secondly, working with the authorities, it is the authorities that are legally responsible for education and the audit office talks about how there perhaps isn't enough discussion with the scrutiny committees in the authorities.

[100] Y trydydd peth, ac rydych wedi ateb hwn, yw bod eich staff wedi cael eu rhannu mewn i dri. Mae'r swyddfa archwilio'n sôn fan hyn am gamau cyfyngedig wrth recriwtio. Ai dyna'r rheswm pam y mae'r patrwm yna gyda chi, gan eich bod wedi methu cael pobl mewn, oni bai eich bod yn eu rhoi mewn dros dro neu rywbeth?

Thirdly, and you have talked about this, is that your staff are split into thirds. The audit office is talking here about limited steps being taken in terms of recruitment. Is that the reason why you have that pattern, because you are failing to bring people in, unless you bring them in on a temporary basis?

[101] Dyna'r tri chwestiwn sydd gennyf ar lywodraethu.

Those are the three questions I have on governance.

[102] **Ms O'Connor:** O ran cyfraddau dirprwyo, rŷm ni'n sôn am yr arian canolog nad yw'n mynd at y staff—y 59. Mae ein cyfraddau dirprwyo yn uchel iawn—tua 96 neu 97 y cant. Rwy'n credu bod hynny oherwydd ein bod yn newid y ffordd rŷm ni'n gweithredu'r system o wella ysgolion. Felly, rydym yn rhoi'r arbenigedd, yn rhoi'r adnodd, yn yr ysgol yn hytrach na'i gadw, fel rwyf wedi dweud o'r blaen, tu ôl i ddesg mewn swyddfa. Felly, mae hynny wedi bod yn greiddiol. Rydym yn symud ein staff gorau o ysgol i ysgol. Mae'r model yna wedi dod â *feedback* positif tu hwnt inni yn ystod y 18 mis diwethaf, a byddwn yn parhau gyda hynny. Rŷm yn ei ddefnyddio ar gyfer pob thema sy'n her inni—asesu, sicrhau ansawdd o fewn pynciau penodol, codi plant ar lefelau uwch. Beth bynnag yw'r thema, rŷm ni'n defnyddio'r staff gorau a'u symud nhw rownd yr ysgolion. Rwy'n credu taw dyna pam mae'n cyfraddau ni'n uwch na'r cyffredin.

[103] O ran ein cydweithio gydag awdurdodau lleol—. Ni wnes ei roi fel rhan o'r dystiolaeth, ond mae ar gael—ein matrices. Nid ydym ni'n gorff hierarchaidd, achos ein bod ni'n bartneriaeth. Felly, mae'r ffordd rydym yn cydweithio â'r awdurdodau lleol, mae'r darlun yna'n ei gwneud yn hollol glir bod atebolrwydd lleol, craffu, i gyd yn dod yn ôl i fanna. Ac mae hynny wedi bod yn rhywbeth pwysig i'r cyd-bwyllgor ers y

Ms O'Connor: In terms of rates of delegation, we're talking about the central funding that does not go to the staff of 59. Our delegation rates are very high—some 96 or 97 per cent. I think that's because we are changing the way we are implementing the school improvement system. We're providing the expertise, the resource, within the school rather than retaining it behind a desk in an office, as I said earlier. So, that's been crucial. We are shifting our best staff from one school to another. That model has brought positive feedback for us over the past 18 months, and we will continue with that. We are using it for all themes that are a challenge to us—assessment, quality assurance within specific subjects, raising children's attainment levels. Whatever the theme, we are using our best staff and moving them around different schools. I think that's why the rates are higher for us than elsewhere.

In terms of our collaboration with local authorities—. I didn't include it as part of the evidence, but it is available—it's our matrix. We're not a hierarchical organisation, because we are a partnership. So, given the way in which we collaborate with the local authorities, that picture makes it entirely clear that with local accountability and scrutiny, it all comes back to there. And that has been important for the joint

dechrau. Felly, roeddwn i, yr wythnos hon, mewn pwyllgor craffu, lle roedd y chwe chadeirydd ac is-gadeirydd o bob sir yn y rhanbarth wedi dod at ei gilydd i graffu ar waith ERW yn ganolog. Felly, rŷm ni'n gwneud hynny yn achlusorol, ond—rŷch chi'n nabod y rhanbarth cystal â fi—nid yw hynny'n bosibl o ran *logistics*, oni bai ein bod ni'n talu am hofrennydd. Felly, rŷm ni wedi datblygu system o *forward work plan* ar gyfer craffu ar draws y rhanbarth, sy'n sicrhau bod y pethau cyffredinol sy'n cyfro'r rhanbarth i gyd yn cael eu cyfro, ond bod materion penodol sydd o ddiddordeb i aelodau etholedig lleol yn cael eu craffu hefyd. Lle—

[104] **Keith Davies:** Pe byddai, fel yr oedd Angela'n sôn yn gynharach, ysgol yn tangyflawni mewn ffordd, a fyddech chi'n cael adroddiadau fel hynny wrth ryw bwyllgor craffu yn un o'r awdurdodau?

[105] **Ms O'Connor:** Mae'r pwyllgorau craffu nawr wedi datblygu ar yr arfer gorau yma rŷm ni'n ei weld. Mae Estyn wedi bwydo yn ôl i ni, a'r swyddfa archwilio, am yr arfer yma o dynnu cadeiryddion y byrddau llywodraethol a phenaethiaid i rannu o'r arfer maen nhw'n ymwneud ag e yn yr ysgolion, ac nid pigo ar yr ysgolion gwanaf neu gryfaf, ond gofyn am sampl o ysgolion. Hefyd, rŷm ni wedi gweld, yn barod yr wythnos hon—achos rwyf wedi bod yna, mae'n ffres yn fy meddwl i—fod

committee from the very outset. So, this week, I attended a scrutiny committee where the six chairs and deputy chairs from every county in the region had come together to scrutinise the work of ERW centrally. So, we do that on an occasional basis, but—you know the region as well as I do—that's not possible in terms of logistics, unless we pay for a helicopter. So, we have developed a system of a forward work plan for scrutiny across the region, and that ensures that those general issues that cover the whole of the region are dealt with, and that specific issues in which local elected members are interested are also scrutinised. Where—

Keith Davies: So, as Angela mentioned earlier, would it be the case that if a school was underperforming in some way, you would receive reports from a scrutiny committee in one of the authorities?

Ms O'Connor: The scrutiny committees have now developed this best practice that we see. Estyn has fed back to us, and so has the Wales Audit Office, about this practice of taking the chairs of governing bodies and heads to share the practice that they're engaged with in the schools, and not to pick on the strongest schools or the weakest schools, but to ask for a sample of schools. We've also seen, just this week—because I've been there, it's fresh in my mind—that that is being rolled out.

hynny'n cael ei rannu. Felly, mae un awdurdod yn gwneud darn ymchwil penodol, efallai, ar gyrhaeddiad plant mewn gofal.

So, one authority is carrying out a specific piece of research on the attainment of children in care.

[106] Mae'r canfyddiadau yna, wrth gwrs, yn ddefnyddiol, nid yn unig i un sir, ond i ni i gyd. Felly, sut ym ni, wedi hynny, yn gallu edrych fel rhanbarth a sicrhau nad ydym yn ailwneud y darn yna o waith mewn pum sir arall, ond ein bod yn defnyddio'r canfyddiadau yna? Felly, mae yna werth ychwanegol i'n gwaith ni wrth gydweithio yn y ffordd yma.

The outcomes of that research, of course, are useful, not only for one authority, but for us all. So, it is about how we as a region can look at how we can ensure that we don't duplicate that piece of work in five different counties, but that we use those outcomes. So, there is added value to our work as we collaborate in this way.

[107] **Keith Davies:** A beth am y recriwtio? Ai dyna pam y mae'r system sydd gyda chi, achos—? Beth mae'r swyddfa archwilio'n ei ddweud yw bod problem, a'r rheswm yr ydym ni'n gofyn am lywodraethu consortia yw efallai fod, dros Gymru gyfan, drafferth yn cael pobl i mewn i weithio i'r consortia.

Keith Davies: And what about recruitment? Is that why you have the system that you have, because—? What the WAO says is that there is a problem, and the reason we're asking about the governance of consortia is that this may be an issue throughout Wales, in that there is a difficulty in getting people to work in the consortia.

[108] **Ms O'Connor:** Mae'n her, ac rŷm ni'n moyn y bobl orau, ac rŷm ni wedi codi ein golygon ac wedi codi'r bar—fel y dywedais i gynnu, mae'n disgwyliadau ni o'n staff yn uchel. Mae yna safonau cenedlaethol y mae'n rhaid i ymgynghorwyr eu cyrraedd, ac rŷm ni yn ERW yn sicrhau bod stamp ERW ar yr ymgynghorwyr yna. Os nad ydyn nhw'n cyrraedd y safonau disgwylidig, mae yna brosesau rheolau perfformiad tyn iawn gyda ni. Rŷm ni'n moyn hefyd sicrhau eu bod

Ms O'Connor: It is a challenge, and we want the best people, and we have raised our sights and raised the bar—as I said earlier, our expectations of our staff are very high. There are national standards that advisers must attain, and we in ERW want to ensure that we have put our stamp on those advisers. If they do not reach the expected standards, we have very strict performance management procedures. We also want to ensure that they are recent and relevant, so that our leaders have

yn *recent and relevant*, a bod hygredded gan ein harweinwyr ni yn y system. Felly, rŷm ni wedi gweithio'n galed arno fe, ac rydym ni yn y gorffennol wedi ei ffindio'n anodd. Rwy'n credu bod yna hefyd faterion eraill o ran recriwtio penaeithaid yn y sector Gymraeg—mae hynny hyd yn oed yn anos wrth inni symud i'r gorllewin, ffindio pobl dda, ac rŷm ni'n moyn y gorau, onid ydym ni? Felly, ar adegau, rŷm ni wedi ei ffindio hi'n anodd recriwtio.

[109] **Keith Davies:** Roeddwn i'n gofyn y cwestiwn hwn yr wythnos diwethaf, chi'n gwybod, achos roeddwn i'n sôn wrth rywun yn y gogledd. Er enghraifft, roedd ysgol yn cael trafferth yn yr adran wyddonol. Gyda thîm y gogledd ar y pryd—byddaf i'n gofyn hyn iddyn nhw nes ymlaen y bore yma—roedd trafferth yn cael rhywun i fynd i mewn i'r ysgol i gefnogi'r adran wyddonol yna.

[110] **Ms O'Connor:** Yn ERW, wrth gwrs, byddem ni'n edrych at ysgol arall sydd â chryfder yn yr adran benodol rŷm ni'n chwilio amdani, ac edrych am adran efallai—. Ni fyddem yn mynd at adran a thynnu'r person cryf mas a'u gadael nhw; byddem ni'n sicrhau bod gyda ni adran lle mae yna gryfder a *depth* a'u galluogi nhw i rannu. Felly, eto, rŷm ni'n cadw'r arbenigedd yn y system ac yn codi arweinwyr.

credibility in the system. Therefore, we have worked hard on this, and in the past we have found some difficulties here. I think that there are also other issues around the recruitment of headteachers in the Welsh-medium sector—that's even more difficult as we move further west, finding good people, and we want the best, don't we? So, at times, we have had some difficulties with recruitment.

Keith Davies: I was asking this question last week, you know, because I mentioned it to someone in north Wales. There was a school that was having difficulties in the science department. With the north Wales team at that time—and I will be putting this to them later this morning—there was a difficulty in finding someone who could go into the school to support the science department.

Ms O'Connor: In ERW, of course, we'd be looking to another school that is strong in the particular department that we are looking for, and we would seek a department perhaps—. We wouldn't go to a department, take a strong teacher out and leave them; we would look for a department where there was strength and depth and we would enable them to share their expertise. So, again, we're keeping expertise in the system and developing leaders.

[111] **Mr E. Evans:** Achos mae hynny'n mynd yn ôl i'r pwynt cyntaf y gofynnoch chi amdano, Keith, sef, pan oeddem ni'n siarad aboutu'r arian dirprwyedig i'r ysgolion er mwyn rhyddhau'r unigolyn yna i fynd. Yn hytrach na'n bod ni'n cyflogi tîm yn ganolog—swît enfawr o bobl—rŷm ni'n rhoi arian i'r ysgol i fedru rhyddhau'r person am gyfnod wedyn. So, mae'r ysgol yn elwa ar yr arian yn uniongyrchol yn hytrach na bod y pot yn y canol yn tyfu.

Mr E. Evans: That goes back to the first point you asked about, Keith, because we were talking about the money that is given to schools to free up that member of staff to go in. Rather than employing a team centrally—a large suite of people—we give money to the school to be able to free up the person for a period of time. So, the school benefits from money directly instead of the pot in the centre growing larger.

[112] **Keith Davies:** Nid yw'r ysgol yn colli hynny.

Keith Davies: The school doesn't lose that.

[113] **Mr E. Evans:** Yr—

Mr E. Evans: The—

[114] **Keith Davies:** Ddim yn colli, maen nhw.

Keith Davies: They don't lose it.

[115] **Mr E. Evans:** Ddim yn colli, ie.

Mr E. Evans: Yes, that's right.

[116] **Ms O'Connor:** Ond, hefyd, mae yna—

Ms O'Connor: But, also, there is—

[117] **David Rees:** We've got to move on, because there are other questions. Suzy.

[118] **Suzy Davies:** For mine, probably a short answer would be easier. Let's start with the Wales Audit Office and then comment on the national model for regional working, and how it's being administered. But, before I ask my one question, can you tell me whether the sort of uncertainty about the future look of local government has had any effect—is responsible in any way for the criticisms drawn out in that Wales Audit Office report? Has that caused ERW any problems?

[119] **Mr E. Evans:** No, because of the way we've been constituted. I think it's really important that, because we are a joint committee-run organisation, there's a joint commitment from the six authorities to work in this way. And,

as I said, it's a clear vision, a clear focus on what we want to achieve—we want to improve learner outcomes. We can do that most effectively working in a collaborative approach to this. So, the commitment to work in that particular way, it would be a problem if one of the six authorities said, 'We don't want to work here—that's not our philosophy'; that would cause a problem for us, but local government reorganisation doesn't affect the way that ERW thinks at the moment.

[120] **Suzy Davies:** Okay, that's great. My main question is this one. You mentioned earlier in answer to Aled what you considered to be the weaknesses in ERW at the moment. But one of the main criticisms of the WAO report was that the national model hasn't led to the development of sufficiently collaborative relationships, despite all the good work that goes on. What do you think are the reasons for that, and were you able to tell the Government in its refreshment process why you think collaboration is still a problem?

[121] **Mr E. Evans:** I don't think collaboration is the problem; I think it goes back to the point I made earlier: it's around the narrow definitive description of school improvement. School improvement has to be something that encompasses all learners. It has to look at children with additional learning needs; it has to look at the inclusion issues. Those elements of it sit outside the national model arrangements at the moment. I think that bringing those in and embracing those as a collaborative approach as well would certainly impact on better learner outcomes in the long term.

[122] **Suzy Davies:** And could you tell the Government that when they were refreshing the model?

[123] **Mr E. Evans:** Yes.

[124] **Suzy Davies:** Okay. Thank you.

[125] **David Rees:** Bethan.

[126] **Bethan Jenkins:** Rwyf eisiau gofyn am ymgynghori â llywodraethwyr. Rydym wedi cael tystiolaeth yn ôl yn dweud bod yna ddiffyg cyfathrebu â nhw ynglŷn â'r gwaith rydych chi'n ei wneud fel **Bethan Jenkins:** I want to talk about engagement with governors. We've received evidence stating that there's a lack of communication with governors about the work that you carry out as consortia. Is this true of

consortia. A ydy hynny'n wir ohonoch chi yn benodol, neu a ydych chi yn gweithio gyda nhw fel sector?

you specifically as a consortium, or would you say that you do work with them as a sector?

[127] **Ms O'Connor:** Llywodraethwyr ysgolion?

Ms O'Connor: Are you talking about school governors?

[128] **Bethan Jenkins:** Llywodraethwyr ysgolion, ie.

Bethan Jenkins: Yes.

[129] **Ms O'Connor:** Ydym. Mae gyda ni fwrdd llywodraethwyr sy'n dod at ei gilydd; maen nhw'n cynrychioli llywodraethwyr ar draws y rhanbarth. Rwy'n cwrdd â nhw bob chwarter, ac maen nhw'n dod ag unrhyw faterion sydd gyda nhw ger bron, sy'n adeiladu wedyn, wrth gwrs, ac yn bwydo ein strategaethau ni a bwydo ein cynllun busnes ni. Wedyn, rwy'n rhoi mewnbwn iddyn nhw ar ba strategaethau y dylai nhw fod yn gweld yn digwydd yn eu hysgolion nhw. Felly, maen nhw yn gallu bod yn ddefnyddiol iawn i ni alluogi ni i wella ein hunan-asesu, achos os nad ydynt yn gweld *impact* ein gwaith ni yn eu hysgolion nhw, maen nhw, wrth gwrs, yn unionsyth yn gallu dweud hynny wrthym ni. Felly, mae hynny'n rhan bwysig o'u rôl nhw fel bwrdd ymgynghorol o fewn ein strwythur llywodraethu ni.

Ms O'Connor: Yes. We do have a board of governors that does come together; they represent governors across the region. I meet with them on a quarterly basis, and they raise any issues that they have, which then feeds into our strategies and our business plan. Then, I give them some input on what strategies they should be seeing implemented in their schools. So, they can be very useful in terms of enabling us to enhance our self-evaluation, because if they don't see the impact of our work in their schools, they can, of course, immediately report that back to us. So, that's an important part of their role as a consultative board within our governance structure.

[130] Yn ogystal â hynny, wrth gwrs, o dan y model cenedlaethol, rydym ni nawr wedi cymryd cefnogaeth i lywodraethwyr o dan adain ERW, fel petai. Ac rydym ni wedi gallu edrych eto ar yr arfer gorau roedd gennym ni yn y chwech awdurdod unigol, ac

In addition to that, under the national model, we have now taken support for governors under ERW's auspices, as it were. And we have again been able to look at the best practice that we had within the six authorities, and roll out that best practice, because

edrych ar ledaenu'r arfer yna, achos beth sydd gyda ni yw patrwm lle mae cefnogaeth i lywodraethwyr wedi bod yn aml yn rhywbeth clerigol, ac nid yw wedi ffocysu ar ddeilliannau i ddysgwyr ac arweinyddiaeth ysgol. Felly, mae angen yr un her ar ein llywodraethwyr ni ag sydd ar ein penaethiaid ni. Felly, rŷm ni'n wedi bod yn edrych ar sut y gallwn ailstrwythuro'r gefnogaeth yna rydym yn ei rhoi i lywodraethwyr—codi ei statws e a chreu e fel rhan o'n model craidd ni ar yr ysgol a gymerodd yr her yma. Mae hynny'n rhywbeth rydym ond newydd ei ddechrau nawr ym mis Medi, felly mae'n *hot off the press*, fel petai.

[131] **Bethan Jenkins:** Byddai'n ddiddorol gwybod sut mae hynny'n datblygu wedyn yn y dyfodol. Y cwestiwn arall sydd gen i yw ynglŷn ag undebau llafur. Mae'r NASUWT yn dweud bod ERW yn siarad â'r undebau llafur, ond weithiau mae yna drafodaethau anodd. Ond beth yw'ch barn chi ynglŷn â gweithio gyda'r sector yna, achos mae yna enghreifftiau, wrth gwrs—er bod yna gytundeb cenedlaethol neu strwythur cenedlaethol, nad yw'r consortia eraill, yn ôl y peth maen nhw yn ei ddweud, yn gweithio gyda undebau llafur. A ydych chi'n siarad â consortia eraill ynglŷn a sut y gallan nhw fod yn gweithio gyda'r undebau llafur, neu a ydych ddim yn rhannu gwybodaeth o ran hynny o beth?

[132] **Mr E. Evans:** Mae yna fforwm

what we have is a pattern where support for governors has often been simply a clerical issue, and hasn't focused on learner outcomes and school leadership. Therefore, we need the same challenge for our governors as we pose to our schools leaders. So, we've been looking at how we can restructure that support that we provide to governors to raise its status and to include it as part of our core model for the school taking up this challenge. That's hot off the press, as it were, because it's something that we only started in September.

Bethan Jenkins: It will be interesting to find out how that works out in the future. My other question is in relation to trade unions. The NASUWT has stated that ERW does speak to the trade unions, but sometimes they can be difficult discussions. But what is your view on working with that sector, because there are examples, of course—although there is a national agreement or a national structure, other consortia, according to what they're saying, are not working with the trade unions. Are you in discussions with other consortia about how they could be working with the trade unions, or do you not share information in that regard?

Mr E. Evans: There is a national

genedlaethol mae gweision sifil y Llywodraeth yn ei gynnal, ac rŷm ni'n yn rhannu ein harfer da yn y fforwm yna. Felly, mae'r syniad wedi cael ei rannu ar draws y bwrdd.

forum that Welsh Government civil servants support, and we share good practice within that forum. So, the ideas have been shared across the board.

10:30

[133] Mae'r cydweithio rydym yn ei wneud ar draws y rhanbarth â'r undebau—rydym yn delio â pholisïau anodd, sydd yn amlwg yn mynd i greu lefel o her: tâl ac amodau athrawon, er enghraifft, yn un a wnaeth greu tipyn o gynnwrf rhyngom ni a'r undebau fel rhanbarth. Rydym ni'n cydnabod y pwynt a wnaeth Keith: mae'r cyfrifoldeb statudol dros addysg yn gorwedd gyda'r awdurdod unigol, a lle y byddem ni'n gorfod mynd drwy brosesau democrataidd lleol, mae hynny'n parhau i ddigwydd. Ond y peth rydym yn ceisio ei gyflawni wrth gydweithio â'r undebau yw lleihau'r baich gwaith ar draws y 22 awdurdod, mewn ffordd. Achos, os allwn ni gael cytundeb mewn un cyfarfod ar un polisi, mae hynny'n osgoi gorfod cael yr un drafodaeth 22 o weithiau mewn awdurdodau ledled Cymru. Mae'r undebau, yn gyffredinol, yn agored i'r math yna o drafodaeth. Mae'n creu tensiwn, wrth gwrs, pan nad ydym yn gallu cytuno. Pan fo elfen o unrhyw bolisi sydd yn achosi gwrthdaro, dyna pryd mae problemau. Ond mae hynny'n wir am unrhyw drafodaeth gyda'r undebau.

The collaboration that we undertake across the region with the unions—we're dealing with difficult policies, which clearly are going to pose some challenges: teachers' pay and conditions, for example, is one that caused some disagreement between ourselves and the unions as a region. We recognise the point Keith made: the statutory responsibility for education lies with the individual authorities, and where we need to go through the local democratic processes, that continues to happen. But what we're trying to achieve by working with the unions is to reduce the workload across the 22 authorities, in a way. Because, if we can get agreement in one meeting on one policy, that negates the need to have that same conversation 22 times in authorities across the whole of Wales. Generally speaking, the unions are open to that kind of discussion and negotiation. It does create tensions, of course, when we're unable to reach agreement. When there's an element of policy that causes conflict, that's when problems arise. But that's true of any discussion or negotiation with the unions.

[134] **Bethan Jenkins:** Ond, i gymryd y mater hwnnw ymlaen, os ydych chi'n mynd i fod yn dechrau trafod materion nad ydynt yn gyfrifoldebau i'r consortia, ble fyddwch yn stopio? Gallech ddechrau trafod pethau eraill nad ydynt o fewn eich cyfrifoldebau chi. Rwy'n credu mai dyna'r peth y mae'r undebau yn ei ddweud. Os nad yw'r cyfrifoldeb gyda chi, pam ydych chi wedyn yn cymryd arnoch i wneud hynny?

[135] **Mr E. Evans:** Y peth rydym wedi'i wneud yw gwneud yn siŵr bod gennym fandad gan yr awdurdodau unigol i siarad ar eu rhan mewn fforwm rhanbarthol. Nid ydym byth yn mynd ag unrhyw beth i unrhyw fforwm rhanbarthol os nad oes gennym fandad gwleidyddol gan yr awdurdodau unigol i siarad ar eu rhan. Y peth arall rydym ni'n ei wneud yn y fforymau hynny yw gwneud yn siŵr bod yna gynrychiolaeth o'r awdurdodau unigol yna yn bresennol hefyd. Nid trafodaeth yn unig rhwng yr undebau a mi yw e. Mae yna griw sylweddol o bobl yn eistedd rownd y ford sy'n cynrychioli pob awdurdod sydd wedi rhoi'r mandad gwleidyddol yna i fedru ymgymryd â'r drafodaeth ar y lefel ranbarthol.

[136] **Bethan Jenkins:** Mae'r cwestiwn olaf sydd gen i ynglŷn â'r peth yr ydych chi wedi dweud yn gynharach ynglŷn â materion anghenion arbennig, a'r bobl sydd yn y sector *looked-after children*. Yn

Bethan Jenkins: But, to take that issue forward a little, if you're going to be starting to discuss issues that are not the consortia's responsibility, where would you stop? You could start to discuss other issues that are not your responsibility. I think that's what the unions are saying. If you don't have responsibility for something, why are you therefore taking it on?

Mr E. Evans: What we've done is ensure that we have a mandate from the individual authorities to speak on their behalf in a regional forum. We would never take anything to any regional forum if we didn't have a political mandate from the individual authorities to speak on their behalf. The other thing we do in those fora is to ensure that there is representation from the individual authorities in attendance also. It's not just a discussion between myself and the unions. There is a significant group of people around the table who represent each and every authority that have given that political mandate to undertake that discussion at the regional level.

Bethan Jenkins: My final question is about something that you said earlier in relation to special needs, and people in the looked-after children sector. There are, obviously, responsibilities that are shared

amlwg, mae yna groes-gyfrifoldebau gan y awdurdodau lleol. Beth ydych yn ei feddwl ynglŷn â hynny? A all fod newid o ran sut y mae hynny'n cael ei reoli? Ai dyna pam yr ydych wedi fflagio hynny i fyny?

[137] **Mr E. Evans:** Rwy'n credu mai'r peth yr ydym yn trio ei ddangos yw—. O ran y trothwyon perfformiad plant, hwyr neu hwyrach, unwaith yr ŷm ni'n cyrraedd rhyw fan arbennig, bydd yn anorfod ein bod ni'n dechrau croesi drwyddo—mae yna derm Saesneg, '*break through the glass ceiling*'—o ran perfformiad plant. Mae yna nenfwd ffug i gael, ac mae'n anorfod, os ydym ni'n mynd i godi'r trothwyon yn uwch ac yn uwch ac yn uwch, bydd yn rhaid inni gynnwys y plant hynny yn yr hafaliad. Felly, mae'n rhaid cael strategaethau cyson ar draws y rhanbarthau er mwyn rhoi'r gefnogaeth yna i hyrwyddo'r gwaith sy'n digwydd yn yr awdurdodau unigol.

[138] **Bethan Jenkins:** A ydyn nhw'n anghyson ar hyn o bryd, felly?

[139] **Mr E. Evans:** Mae bob awdurdod yn gyfrifol am hynny yn annibynnol ar y foment. Y peth rŷm ni'n trio ei wneud yw ychwanegu fe at waith ERW er mwyn ein bod ni'n gallu cael gwell cysondeb ar draws y rhanbarth. Roeddech yn siarad am blant 'LAC' yn benodol: wel, wrth inni greu cydbwyllgor fan hyn, mae hynny wedi agor drysau cyfathrebu nad oeddent yn agos i fod mor effeithiol

across the local authorities. What do you think about that? Could there be a change in how that is managed? Is that why you've flagged that up?

Mr E. Evans: I think that what we're trying to show is—. In terms of the pupil performance thresholds, at some point, once we reach a particular level, it will be inevitable that we start to break through—there's an English term, 'break through the glass ceiling'—in terms of pupil performance. There is a glass ceiling, and it is inevitable, if we're going to continually raise those thresholds, that we have to include those children in the equation. So, we do have to have consistent strategies across the regions in order to provide that support to promote the work that's going on within the individual authorities.

Bethan Jenkins: Are they inconsistent at present, then?

Mr E. Evans: Every authority is responsible for that independently at present. What we're trying to do is add it to the work of ERW so that we can get better consistency across the region. You mentioned looked-after children specifically: well, as we've created a joint committee, that has opened doors to communication that wasn't anywhere near as effective in the past. We are now able to speak to

yn y gorffennol. Nawr, bellach, rydym yn medru siarad â'n cymdogion yn hollol agored mewn unrhyw gyd-destun, ac rwy'n credu bod y berthynas yn tyfu ac yn gwella yn gyson oherwydd hynny.

[140] **Bethan Jenkins:** Diolch.

Bethan Jenkins: Thank you.

[141] **David Rees:** Thank you for that. We've come to the end of the time allocated to us. We very much appreciate the evidence you've given us, and the information. You will receive a copy of the transcript for any factual inaccuracies. Please, if there are any, let the clerks know as soon as possible. So, once again, thank you very much for your attendance this morning—very helpful.

[142] **Mr E. Evans:** Diolch yn fawr.

[143] **Ms O'Connor:** Diolch.

[144] **David Rees:** I suggest that we have a five-minute break, and we can commence the next session at 10.40 a.m.

*Gohiriwyd y cyfarfod rhwng 10:34 a 10:43.
The meeting adjourned between 10:34 and 10:43.*

**Trafodaeth â Chonsortia Addysg Rhanbarthol—Gwasanaeth
Effeithiolrwydd a Gwella Ysgolion Rhanbarthol (GwE)
Discussion with Regional Education Consortia—Regional School
Effectiveness and Improvement Service for North Wales (GwE)**

[145] **David Rees:** Can I welcome Members and the public back to this morning's session of the Children, Young People and Education Committee? We move into our next item, continuing our inquiry looking at regional consortia. Can I welcome Huw Foster Evans, managing director of GwE, and Ian Budd, the director of north Wales for GwE—the consortia representative for north Wales? Welcome and thank you for the written paper. Clearly, there are some questions we wish to pursue and we'll move into the questions straight away and Aled Roberts will start.

[146] **Mr Budd:** If I may, Chair, thank you for the introduction. The last time I was before this committee, it was as chair of the Association of Directors of Education in Wales. Since then, I have moved on to lead director role in north Wales, as well as being the ongoing chief education officer in Flintshire.

[147] I was asked very specifically to offer you an apology this morning from Councillor Eryl Williams, our lead member in north Wales. Unfortunately, he has to attend a major meeting in Denbighshire this morning.

[148] **David Rees:** Okay. It seems that most of our councillors are attending major meetings this morning. Thank you for that, anyway. It is noted. Aled.

[149] **Aled Roberts:** Diolch. Bore da. **Aled Roberts:** Thank you. Good morning.

[150] **Mr H. Evans:** Bore da.

[151] **Mr Budd:** Bore da.

10:45

[152] **Aled Roberts:** Rwyf am eich cyfeirio chi, yn y lle cyntaf, at adroddiad Estyn. Mae hwnnw'n cydnabod bod perfformiad yn gyson uwch yn ardal GwE ac ERW nag yn y rhanbarthau eraill. Ond, o fewn tystiolaeth sydd wedi cael ei rhoi i ni gan ERW, mae'n ymddangos nad yw'r cynnydd yn GwE, yn arbennig, gymaint na chystal ag o fewn yr ardaloedd eraill. Felly, a oes gennych chi unrhyw sylw yn y lle cyntaf ar y diffyg cynnydd yma o ran gwella perfformiad ysgolion?

Aled Roberts: I want to refer you, in the first instance, to Estyn's report. That acknowledges that performance was consistently higher in the GwE and ERW regions than in the other regions. But, within the evidence that has been submitted to us by ERW, it appears that the progress in GwE in particular is not as good as within the other regions. So, could you comment on the lack of progress in terms of school improvement?

[153] **Mr H. Evans:** Diolch yn fawr. I fod yn eglur am y data rydym yn cyfeirio ato fan hyn, rydym yn cyfeirio at ddata dros dro cyfnod allweddol 4. Mae'r patrwm yn wahanol pan rydych

Mr H. Evans: Thank you very much. Just to be clear on the data that we're referring to, we're referring to pro tem data for key stage 4. The pattern's different when you look at

yn edrych ar y cyfnod sylfaenol—cyfnod allweddol 2 a chyfnod allweddol 3. Mae'r data rwy'n cymryd eich bod chi'n cyfeirio ato yn cyfeirio at y trothwy lefel 2, yn cynnwys Cymraeg, Saesneg a mathemateg, sef data dros dro sydd eto i gael ei gadarnhau. Yn amlwg, mi fydd yna gymariaethau yn cael eu gwneud pan fydd y data hwnnw yn derfynol ac yn llawn, ac y byddwn yn sicr fod pawb wedi cael eu cynnwys.

[154] Fodd bynnag, buaswn i yn dweud a buaswn i yn cytuno, er bod yna gynnydd wedi bod yn ardal gogledd Cymru eleni yn y dangosydd arbennig rydych yn cyfeirio ato—ac mae hynny felly yn gosod y rhanbarth ar ei berfformiad uchaf erioed—mae cyfartaledd y cynnydd dros y cyfnod i mi eleni yn siomedig, ac mi fyddwn i'n cytuno efo hynny. Ac er bod y dangosydd ar ei uchaf, oherwydd nad yw'r cynnydd wedi digwydd efallai mor gyflym â mewn rhai rhanbarthau eraill, byddwn yn cydnabod efallai bod yna rai rhanbarthau yn cychwyn o sylfaen wahanol o ran gwneud y cynnydd hwnnw. Ond, mi fyddwn i'n dweud fy mod i'n bersonol ac ar ran tîm GwE yn siomedig efo cyfradd y cynnydd yn 2015 mewn un flwyddyn.

[155] **Aled Roberts:** Ac er mwyn i ni ddeall y gwahanol drefniadau, rydym yn ymwybodol bod yna fodel cenedlaethol, ond mae'n ymddangos o beth rydym wedi'i glywed eisoes bod y trefniadau yn wahanol iawn ar

the foundation phase—key stage 2 and key stage 3. The data you're referring to refer to the level 2 threshold, including Welsh, English and maths, where that data is yet to be validated. Clearly, comparisons will be made when that data is full and comprehensively completed.

But, I would say that although there has been progress made in the north Wales region this year in the particular indicator that you refer to—and that therefore places the region at its highest performance level ever—the average level of progress over the period for me this year is disappointing, and I would agree with that. And although the indicator is at a peak, because the progress hasn't been made as quickly as in some other areas, I would acknowledge that perhaps there are some regions that are starting from a different baseline in making that progress. But, I would say that I personally and on behalf of the GwE team am disappointed with the rate of progress for 2015 in that single year.

Aled Roberts: And in order for us to understand the varying arrangements, we're aware that there's a national model, but it appears from what we've heard already that the arrangements vary

draws y rhanbarthau. O ran y ffordd rydych chi'n gweithredu, a allwch chi egluro wrthym ni faint o staff llawn amser sydd gennych chi, faint o staff sydd wedi secondio, a oes gennych chi broblemau ynglŷn â recriwtio ac a oes yna lot o swyddi gwag, jest er mwyn i ni gael rhyw fath o flas o'r sefyllfa rydych chi ynnddi ar hyn o bryd?

[156] **Mr H. Evans:** Océ. Os caf yn gyntaf egluro, mae gennym gyfran o staff sydd yn llawn amser, cyfran sy'n rhan amser a chyfran ar secondiad, ac yn y blaen. Os ydym yn cyfeirio at staff sydd wedi cael eu hariannu o'r pot canolog yn hytrach nag o swyddi dros dro sy'n dod drwy grantiau—mae'n bwysig ein bod ni'n cymharu tebyg efo'i debyg yn y fan hyn—mae gennym ni 30 o ymgynghorwyr her llawn amser o ran swyddi llawn amser, ond mae cyfran o'r rheini wedyn yn swyddi rhannu, felly yn swyddi rhan amser. Mae yna gyfran o'r rheini wedyn sydd yn dod ar secondiadau o ysgolion ac ati, ac mae hynny yn caniatáu i ni gael yr amrywiaeth profiad rydym ei angen o fewn y gwasanaeth, yn ogystal â rhywfaint o sefydlogrwydd yn y tîm canolog hefyd.

[157] Tu hwnt i hynny, wrth gwrs, mae yna swyddi ychwanegol wedyn wedi cael eu hariannu drwy grantiau, drwy'r grant gwella addysg, ac ati, ond mae'r rheini yn swyddi dros dro am dymor, beth bynnag yw tymor y grant, ac mae'r bobl hynny wedyn yn

quite a bit across the different regions. In terms of the way that you operate, could you explain to us how many full-time staff you have, how many staff members are seconded, whether you have problems in terms of recruitment and whether there are a lot of vacant posts, just so that we can have some kind of flavour of the situation that you're in at present?

Mr H. Evans: Okay. If I could first of all explain that we do have a percentage of full-time staff, a percentage that are part-time and a percentage that are on secondment. If we are looking at the staff funded from the central pot rather than the temporary posts funded through grants—it's important that we compare like-for-like here—we have 30 challenge advisers working on a full-time basis in terms of full-time posts, but a percentage of those are job shares, so they're part-time, and a percentage are on secondment from schools and so on, and that allows us to have that range of experience that we need within the service, as well as some stability in the central team.

Over and above that, there are additional posts that are funded via grants, the education improvement grant and so on, and those are temporary posts over the term of the grant, and those people work in very specific areas.

gweithio mewn ardaloedd penodol iawn.

[158] Mae'r nifer sydd wedi cael ei osod wedi cael ei osod gan y gwasanaeth yn ganolog gan GwE pan sefydlwyd y gwasanaeth ar gyfer bodloni anghenion cytundeb lefel gwasanaeth penodol a gafodd ei greu ar y pryd, ac sydd wedi cael ei addasu wedyn yng ngoleuni datblygiadau'r model cenedlaethol.

[159] **Aled Roberts:** Roeddech yn cyfeirio at y staffio craidd ac yn awgrymu bod yna wahaniaethau ar draws Cymru o ran y nifer o staff sy'n cael eu hariannu drwy grantiau—

[160] **Mr H. Evans:** Mae o'n wir bod yna wahaniaeth. Mae yna wahaniaeth yn sut mae'r grantiau yn cael eu defnyddio mewn gwahanol ardaloedd. Nid wyf yn meddwl bod hynny o angenrheidrwydd yn bryder; mae'n rhaid i bob ardal allu ymateb i'w anghenion lleol ei hun, ac rwy'n meddwl ei bod yn bwysig eu bod yn cael y cyfleoedd i wneud hynny. Ond, yn ein hardal ni, rydym yn adnabod lle rydym angen defnyddio'r grantiau hynny, mewn amryfal ffyrdd weithiau—drwy wasanaeth canolog GwE, weithiau drwy'r chwe awdurdod lleol sydd yn amlwg yn bartneriaid clos efo ni yn hyn o beth, ac mae gan bob rhanbarth ei threfniadau ei hun ynglŷn â gwneud hynny er mwyn bodloni anghenion lleol, byddwn i'n dweud.

The numbers designated were set by the central service in GwE when it was established to meet the requirements of the specific service level agreement created at the time, and has been adapted in light of developments in terms of the national model.

Aled Roberts: You referred the core staff and you suggested that there were variations across Wales in terms of the number of staff who are funded through grants.

Mr H. Evans: It is true that there is a difference. There's a difference in the way in which grants are used in different areas. I don't think that's necessarily a concern; every area must be able to meet its own local needs, and it's important that they have an opportunity to do that. But, in our area, we identify where those grants need to be used, in various different ways sometimes—through the central GwE service, sometimes through the six local authorities that are close partners in that regard, and each region has its own arrangement in terms of doing that in order to meet local needs, is what I would say.

[161] **Aled Roberts:** Ocê, a beth yw maint eich cyllideb ganolog chi? Ac o ystyried faint o bwysau sydd ar awdurdodau lleol wrth edrych ymlaen, rydym yn ymwybodol bod yna gynlluniau busnes ar gyfer tair blynedd, rwy'n meddwl. Pa fath o sicrwydd sydd gennych chi yn y ffordd rydych chi yn cael eich ariannu? A oes yna berygl bod rhai awdurdodau hwyrach yn ystyried cwtogi ar y grant sy'n dod atoch chi fel gwasanaeth?

[162] **Mr H. Evans:** Mi wna i ddechrau, ond rwy'n siŵr y bydd lan eisiau dod i mewn wedyn. Mae maint cyllideb ganolog GwE yn cael ei osod drwy'r model cenedlaethol—oddeutu £4.1 miliwn. Mae hwnnw wedi cael ei osod allan ac mae o yna o fewn model. Mae tua £0.5 miliwn o hwnnw yn aros gyda'r awdurdodau lleol i ddarparu gwasanaethau sydd yn rhan o'r model cenedlaethol, ond sydd yn dal i gael eu darparu drwy strwythurau a systemau'r awdurdodau lleol unigol. Mae enghreifftiau o hynny ym meysydd adnoddau dynol, meysydd cefnogaeth i lywodraethwyr ac ati, sydd yn rhan o'r model cenedlaethol, ond mae'r rheini'n cael eu rhedeg drwy strwythurau rhanbarthol sydd yn sefyll o fewn yr awdurdodau lleol eu hunain.

[163] O ran sicrwydd i'r dyfodol, nac oes, nid oes sicrwydd i'r dyfodol mwy na mewn unrhyw system arall. Mi gawsom ni yng ngogledd Cymru

Aled Roberts: Okay, and what is the size of your central budget? And bearing in mind how much pressure there is on local authorities looking ahead, we're aware at present that there are three-year business cases. What kind of assurance do you have in the way that you are funded? Is there a risk that some authorities may consider cutting the grants that come to you as a service?

Mr H. Evans: I will start, but I'm sure that lan will want to come in then. The size of the GwE's central budget is set through the national model—around £4.1 million. That is set out and is within the model. Some £0.5 million of that remains with the local authorities to provide services that are part of the national model, but are still provided through the individual authorities' local systems and structures. There are examples of that in human resources, in governance support and so on, which are part of the national model, but those are run through regional structures, which remain within the individual local authorities themselves.

In terms of assurances for the future, no, there are no assurances for the future more than in any other system. We in north Wales reached

gytundeb, pan sefydlwyd y agreement when the service was gwasanaeth, i greu cyfnod o dair established to have a three-year blynedd pan oedd cyllideb y period where the central budget was gwasanaeth canolog yn cael ei guaranteed and that period comes to warantu ac mae'r cyfnod hwnnw yn an end in April 2016. As a result of dod i ben ym mis Ebrill 2016. O that, the service is currently—we've ganlyniad i hynny, mae'r gwasanaeth been having discussions this week, wrthi rŵan—rydym wedi bod yn cael and we'll be having further trafodaethau yr wythnos yma, a discussions with the six chief byddwn yn cael trafodaethau pellach executives in north Wales, on what efo'r chwe prif weithredwr yng the implications of cuts of various ngogledd Cymru, ynglŷn â beth different scales would be for the fyddai goblygiadau toriadau o service, and therefore, for the wahanol feintiau i'r gwasanaeth, ac schools, and therefore, to learner felly i'r ysgolion, ac felly i gyflawniad attainment, and we have to model disgyblion, ac rydym yn gorfod that on the basis of a various range modelu hynny ar sail amrediad of percentages of cuts. gwahanol o ganrannau o doriadau.

[164] **Mr Budd:** GwE is very much a joint service of the six authorities. Its work programme is collectively owned across those six authorities. It has, underpinning it, a joint agreement between the six authorities and the governance arrangement is through a joint committee arrangement. Any discussions in terms of the local authorities' contributions to GwE's work programme for future years will continue to be done on a joint authority basis. If you were to be asking me around recommendations for system design and development going forward, of course, if you are looking for a long-term strategy in terms of school improvement, confidence in terms of school improvement programmes and deployment of resources, given that there is a significant amount of funding going into school improvement from the individual authorities—. But alongside that, a lot of the development programme is funded through specific grants. There would be more rigour to the business planning and more confidence in the business planning if, in some way, collectively, all the tiers of the system could work together to be working on medium-term financial targets—three-year financial targets—rather than grants often being announced as late as March and then having to adjust strategy at the last moment.

[165] **Aled Roberts:** So, as far as the operation of the joint service is concerned, will it be the case, then, that there will be a business plan going forward that would be presented to the board of GwE?

[166] **Mr H. Evans:** To the joint committee.

[167] **Aled Roberts:** And then if there was a reduction in grant there would be a common approach across the six authorities. That's what's envisaged then, is it?

[168] **Mr Budd:** Absolutely. It's a joint discussion in terms of developing how specific grants, or grant reductions, are announced and how they are handled, and those recommendations go through to a joint committee and through the decision-making mechanisms of the individual authorities as well, where there are implications in terms of match funding.

[169] **David Rees:** Suzy has a specific point here.

[170] **Suzy Davies:** It's just for confirmation really. There are various criticisms being levelled at the consortia at the moment; I don't want to ask about those now, but from what you're saying, none of that can be attributed to uncertainty about local government reorganisation.

[171] **Mr Budd:** In short, no, nothing to do with local government reorganisation.

[172] **Suzy Davies:** Thank you very much.

[173] **Mr Budd:** In fact, I do think that consortia arrangements do help us in terms of resilience through a period of uncertainty around potential local government reorganisation.

[174] **Suzy Davies:** Okay; thanks.

[175] **Aled Roberts:** A alla i jest ofyn ichi ateb un peth wnes i ofyn yn gynharach? Faint o swyddi gweigion sydd gennych chi o fewn eich strwythur ar hyn o bryd? Hefyd, wrth ystyried bod beirniadaeth, i ryw raddau, o fewn adroddiad Estyn ynglŷn â chryfder hunanasesiad y consortiwm, beth rydych yn gweld, wrth ystyried eich profiad personol

Aled Roberts: Can I just ask you to answer one thing that I asked earlier? How many vacant posts do you have within your structure at present? Also, considering that there has been some criticism, to an extent, within Estyn's report about the strength of self-assessment by the consortium, what do you see, in considering your personal experience, as GwE's main

chi, fel prif wendidau GwE ar hyn o bryd? weaknesses at present?

[176] **Mr H. Evans:** Yng nghydestun swyddi gweigion, ar hyn o bryd mae gennym un swydd barhaol ran-amser sydd yn wag ac sy'n cael ei hysbysebu ar hyn o bryd, gyda'r dyddiad cau yn llythrennol heddiw. Mae honno ar gyfer cynyddu gwaith GwE i mewn i'r unedau cyfeirio disgyblion ar draws y rhanbarth nad ydynt, yn hanesyddol, wedi bod yn rhan o'r gwasanaeth. Nid yw hi'n swydd wag oherwydd ein bod ni wedi methu ei llenwi hi; mae hi'n swydd wag oherwydd ein bod ni'n symud rwan i gynnwys yr unedau, sydd yn hanfodol bwysig, wrth gwrs, efo plant bregus yn eu plith nhw, i weithio o dan fantell GwE mewn ffordd newydd.

Mr H. Evans: In the context of vacancies, at present, we have one permanent part-time post which is vacant and which is being advertised at present, and the closing date is literally today. That is to expand GwE's work into the pupil referral units across the region, which historically haven't been part of our remit. So, it's not a vacant post because we've failed to fill it; it's a vacant post because we are moving to include the units, which are crucially important, of course, with vulnerable children as part of their responsibilities, under the auspices of GwE in a new model.

[177] Mi wnaethoch chi ofyn wedyn ynglŷn â'r gwendidau, fel rwy'n eu gweld nhw, ac yn sicr mi fyddwn i'n dweud yn y fan hon, yn y lle cyntaf, mai fy mhryder mwyaf i a'r gwendid mwyaf rwy'n ei weld o fewn y gyfundrefn ar hyn o bryd ydy'r ffaith bod perfformiad ysgolion unigol yn tueddu i fod yn oriog, i fyny ac i lawr, ac mae'r cysondeb rydym ni'n gweld o ran cynnydd cyson ar draws ein hysgolion ni yn anodd iawn i'w gael. Er eich bod chi'n gweld ar draws rhanbarth, ac ar draws lefel awdurdodau lleol, mi welwch chi gynnydd cyffredinol yn y mwyafrif o achosion. Pan ydych chi'n dod i edrych ar, yn arbennig yn y sector

You then asked about the weaknesses as I see them, and, certainly, I would say in the first place that my greatest concern and the greatest weakness I see within the system at present is the fact that individual schools' performance does tend to be inconsistent, up and down, and the consistency we see in terms of development and progress within our schools is very difficult to attain. So, although across a region and across the local authority level, you may see general progress being made in most cases, when you look, particularly in the secondary sector, at 55 schools, then the performance, although improving over a period of

uwchradd, 55 o ysgolion, mae'r perfformiad, er efallai'n gwella dros gyfnod, yn tueddu i fod yn oriog, Rwy'n meddwl bod gallu adnabod pryd mae'r newidiadau yma'n digwydd yn hanfodol inni.

[178] Mi wnaethoch chi gyfeirio yn gynharach at berfformiad cymharol GwE â pherfformiad awdurdodau eraill. Rwy'n meddwl ei bod hi'n bwysig, yn y cyd-destun yna, fy mod i'n egluro hefyd pan ydych chi'n edrych ar yr ysgolion isaf eu perfformiad yn GwE yn hanesyddol, bod y cynnydd rydym ni wedi ei weld yn unol â ffigurau dros dro 2015 yn yr ysgolion hynny nid yn unig yn uwch na'r cynnydd rhanbarthol ond hefyd yn uwch na'r cynnydd cenedlaethol sydd wedi bod. Mae'r ysgolion hynny lle mae perfformiad wedi bod yn bryder yn hanesyddol wedi gwneud cynnydd llawer uwch ar gyfartaledd na'r patrwm ar draws Cymru.

[179] Ond pan ydych chi'n edrych yn gyffredinol wedyn ar ysgolion sydd wedi bod yn gymharol uchel eu perfformiad, mae yna enghreifftiau o ysgolion sydd wedi syrthio ac mae yna enghreifftiau o ysgolion sydd wedi syrthio ac wedi codi eto. Tra bo'r patrwm oriog yna yn parhau, mae o'n wendid o fewn y gyfundrefn yn fy marn i. Pan rydw i'n edrych yn ôl dros ddata 10 neu 15 mlynedd, rydych chi'n gweld yn union yr un patrymau. Rwan, rwy'n derbyn eich bod chi'n mynd i weld cynnydd a

time, does tend to be up and down. I think being able to identify when these changes actually happen is crucial for us.

You made reference earlier to GwE's performance in comparison with other authorities. I think it's important, in that context, that I explain also that when you look at the lowest performing schools in GwE on a historic basis that the progress that we have seen in accordance with the unverified 2015 figures in those schools is not only higher than the regional progress that has been made, but also the national improvements made. So, those schools where performance has been a concern in the past have made far greater progress, on average, than the pattern across the whole of Wales.

But when you then look in general at schools that have performed relatively well, there are examples of schools where there has been a decline in performance and there are examples of schools that have declined and then raised their performance again. Whilst we have that inconsistency, it is a weakness within the system, in my view. When I look back over the data over 10 or 15 years, you see exactly the same patterns. Now, I accept that you will see a rise and fall in any school,

gostwng mewn unrhyw ysgol, yn dibynnu ar natur y garfan unigol o fewn yr ysgol honno. Yr hyn sy'n fy mhryderu ydy lle mae'r cynnydd neu'r gostyngiad hwnnw yn annisgwyl inni ac i'r ysgol.

depending on the nature of the individual cohort within that school. What concerns me is where that rise or fall in performance is unexpected for us and for the school.

[180] **David Rees:** A quick one, and then Simon is coming in.

[181] **Keith Davies:** Roeddech chi wedi sôn fanna am 55 o ysgolion, ac rwy'n cofio gweithio mewn awdurdod â 47 o ysgolion uwchradd. Ar ddiwedd y flwyddyn academaidd, roedd y cyfarwyddwr addysg yn galw penaethiaid y 10 ysgol a wnaeth waethaf yn y flwyddyn, a chyfrifoldeb yr awdurdod oedd e. Gyda chi, ai cyfrifoldeb yr awdurdod yw hi nawr i edrych ar yr ysgolion hyn, neu ai'ch cyfrifoldeb chi fel consortiwm? Pwy sydd â'r cyfrifoldeb?

Keith Davies: You were talking there about 55 schools, and I remember working in an authority where there were 47 secondary schools. At the end of the academic year, the director of education would call in the headteachers of the 10 worst performing schools during the year, and it was the responsibility of the authority. With you, is it the responsibility of the authority now to look at these schools or is it your responsibility as a consortium? With whom does the responsibility lie?

[182] **Mr H. Evans:** Mae o'n gyfrifoldeb ar y cyd, ac rwy'n siŵr y daw Ian i mewn yn y funud am hynny eto. Rwy'n gwybod mai dyna ydy'r ateb hawdd imi ei roi. Mae'r cyfrifoldeb statudol am berfformiad ysgolion, wrth gwrs, yn sefyll gyda'r awdurdodau lleol. I ni fel gwasanaeth, lle mae'r perfformiad wedi syrthio, mae'n rhaid inni gael strategaeth unigol ar gyfer yr ysgolion hynny o ran gweithio efo nhw yn eu gwahanol gyd-destunau lle mae eu perfformiad nhw yn is na lle roedden nhw'n meddwl roedden nhw'n mynd i fod, ac mae yna enghreifftiau o hynny hefyd. Mae'n

Mr H. Evans: It's a joint responsibility, and I'm sure Ian will come in on this again. I know that's an easy answer for me to give to your question. The statutory responsibility for school performance, of course, sits with the local authorities. For us as a service, where performance has declined, then we must have an individual strategy for such school in terms of how we work with them in their various different contexts where their performance is lower than where they had anticipated, and there are also examples of that. We have to work very carefully indeed on tracking systems and following individual

rhaid inni weithio'n ofalus iawn ar gyfundrefnau tracio a dilyn plant drwy'r ysgol. Nid yw'r wybodaeth rydym ni'n ei chael—nid yw'r wybodaeth rydych chi'n ei chael fel Aelodau yma ddim ond cystal â beth sy'n mynd i mewn ar ddechrau'r system.

[183] **Keith Davies:** A fydd eich adroddiad chi'n mynd wedyn at yr awdurdod os ydych chi'n—?

[184] **Mr H. Evans:** Ydy. Pe baech chi wedi bod yn bresennol ddoe yng nghyfarfod cydbwyllgor GwE—dyna pam roeddwn i wedi gorfod cychwyn ar doriad gwawr i fod yma heddiw; roedd gennym ni gydbwyllgor GwE yn y gogledd brynhawn ddoe—fe fyddech chi wedi clywed manylion clir yn y cyd-destun yna yn cael eu trafod, nid yn unig gan y chwe chyfarwyddwr addysg ond y chwe aelod arweiniol y gwahanol gabinetau. Mae'r negeseuon yn glir, mae'r negeseuon yn amlwg i bawb ac maen nhw'n cael eu rhannu.

[185] **Mr Budd:** We've worked very hard to develop an integrated system within north Wales. It's taken time to develop the working relationships and working practices to underpin that, but I'm confident they are in place now. Huw's team are very much the field force for school improvement. When there is a need for there to be an intervention in relation to an individual school, the local authorities now, by protocol, do follow through, very clearly, where those interventions are identified.

11:00

[186] I did want to come back, if I may, just very briefly, in terms of Aled's question as well around weaknesses within the system. As we were just

pupils through the school. The information that we receive—the information that you receive as Members here is only as good as the information provided at the beginning of that process.

Keith Davies: So, does your report then go to the local authority if you—?

Mr H. Evans: Yes. If you had attended the GwE joint committee yesterday—that's why I had to start at the crack of dawn this morning; we had a GwE joint committee in north Wales yesterday afternoon—you would have heard clear details discussed in that context, not only by the six directors of education, but the six lead members of the various cabinets. The messages are clear to everyone and they are disseminated and shared.

indicating in that last answer, I am very confident that we have systems in place to make the identification of schools, needing an intervention or support, a very positive and clear experience. We have the protocols in place to be able to follow through.

[187] There is actually evidence already that, where we are putting our resources and where we are intervening, it is making a difference in the life of those school communities. But there is still, for me, a much bigger system question. We are, at national level and at regional level, starting to put in place the appropriate strategies and mechanisms in terms of professional formation with the Furlong review for initial teacher training and we are starting to put the frameworks in place in relation to professional development at all stages of the education workforces and time in the education workforce. Those frameworks are coming together, but it is still a major risk for us around resourcing those development opportunities. It is only if people are taking their own personal professional development seriously that schools are supporting them in those professional development opportunities and consortia and, at national level, we are identifying those appropriate development opportunities that will have sustainable school improvement across the system.

[188] **David Rees:** Angela on this particular point.

[189] **Angela Burns:** It follows on from that because much of what we've talked about has been about the situation today, and I wanted to ask you to cast your minds forward a few years because, of course, we've got Donaldson coming through as well as the Furlong review. If we have a situation where schools are gradually improving, how will you set about benchmarking what is going to be a brand new methodology, essentially? Can you build on your discussion just then about the Furlong review and what work you are doing with the Welsh Government at present to ensure that teachers, the school improvement board and the local authorities are all going to be able to be on board at the same time with the Donaldson new school system coming through? Because what would be demoralising, I think, beyond all belief, would be to be asked to implement, if you're a teacher or a head, a whole new system and then find you're failing, having just dragged yourself up by your bootstraps before that.

[190] **Mr Budd:** In terms of initial teacher training, there is a very clear agenda set in terms of recommendations from the Furlong review. It's interesting, though, when we do discuss matters with our higher education

partners, there is a sign-up to the principles within the Furlong review, but there is a need for us to work together in terms of what that looks like in terms of the programme in initial teacher training and the experiences that people, going through initial teacher training, have before they are accredited and out in the workforce.

[191] **Angela Burns:** Sorry, can I just interrupt you there because that's all well and good for the brand-new teachers, coming off the press, but what about—? Most of our workforce are well-established teachers who have seen initiatives come and go. How are you going to bring them on board whilst at the same time bring a whole new education programme through to a brand-new set of children?

[192] **Mr H. Evans:** I think it would be fair to say that there needs to be, and there is currently in development, a whole professional development continuum, which will include all the people who you have described. It's very easy for me to put that in words, but, essentially, as the four consortia, we've come together with Welsh Government and we have agreed to take on board developments in various sections of that continuum. For example, in north Wales now, we are leading on middle management, middle leadership development and also on the work with more experienced headteachers, because it's quite easy to forget about that as a cohort of important people who need to move on.

[193] Other consortia are leading on elements such as newly qualified teachers, such as the movement from senior leadership into headship and headship into system leadership et cetera. Now, this is in a very early stage. We are trying to do it in a way where the practice that we're developing locally is shared across the four consortia. It will take a lot of commitment and it'll take a lot of work, but at least by doing it this way, there is the opportunity for us not to duplicate and not to create packages, because even looking in north Wales, as a service that has grown around six local authorities, the actual differences in the opportunities that were available for teachers on various parts of that continuum were significant if you happened to be in one particular authority or another authority. Each authority had its own strengths, naturally, and it's a matter of getting a coherent package together and build it up from the best. It's not going to be easy, and it's not good to be straightforward, but the piece of work has already started. So, that's one part of it.

[194] Regarding the Donaldson question: very, very exciting opportunity for

education in Wales. No question about that at all. It's a long-term project. It needs to be recognised as a long-term project. Within that there is a risk that the current cohort of youngsters somehow get missed out because they're not important in the Donaldson development because they're not going to be on stream at the point where those things are in place, and that's an ongoing challenge for all the consortia. Just to digress quickly, the 2015 to 2017 new GCSEs in the core subjects, for example—a lot of attention, quite rightly so, and a lot of resource have gone into creating supporting packages for those. We've got a cohort of youngsters who are finishing in 2016. There's always the danger when we're looking at these things.

[195] Now, as far as Donaldson is concerned again, you will be aware of the approaches regarding pioneer schools and so on. The fact that we want to have best professionals working on this agenda so that it is not a curriculum that is, you know, à la 1988–9 thrust down from above, but a curriculum that grows organically, hopefully—. Now, there are major challenges in there as well. Then we have the new deal for the professional workforce sitting side by side that. We know that we've got schools that are outstandingly good at developing leaders and have got fantastic professional development opportunities built into their own structures and procedures, but not all of them, by a long way.

[196] So, the challenges are there. I'm hopeful that the initial structures at least enable us to go in the direction that we need to go in, but we need to be aware that we're asking schools yet again to contribute to a crucially important agenda without taking their eye off today's game.

[197] **Mr Budd:** I'm confident that we have the capacity within the system in terms of design and kitemarking of the programmes. What I'm not confident on, at this stage, is that we have a resourcing model for which, of course, practitioners, schools, consortia, local authorities and central government are all part of developing the picture.

[198] **Angela Burns:** I think one of the concerns is that we might be saying 10 years down the road—. Because, at the moment, I think we all sign up to the fact that Donaldson is an exciting opportunity for education in Wales. I think that one of the concerns is that we are 10 years down the road, and whilst we've installed and got going the new pedagogy, people are actually saying, 'Oh, but, actually, school improvement's kind of dropped by the wayside a bit because we were so busy doing the doing that we didn't do the evaluating and the benchmarking, and, partly, because it's so new, we don't

have anything to benchmark against.'

[199] **Mr H. Evans:** There's always a risk there, but I think that to mitigate that risk, the most important thing is to be aware of it. I think that we are taking on board a massive challenge, as a nation, to create a new curriculum for Wales. There's no question about that. If we get it right, the rewards out there are phenomenal.

[200] **Mr Budd:** It is a really positive challenge that's been set for us by Graham Donaldson. It's one for which there has been a positive reception for the ideas amongst the education workforce. Our task at the moment is harnessing that and then sustaining it, not least with a period of austerity and resourcing challenges.

[201] In terms of mitigating the risk that you've identified, the key, as Huw was identifying, is that we recognise it and deal with it day by day, because nobody will thank us if we take our eye off the ball of current schools performance, and securing the best opportunities and outcomes for every one of the learners in our care.

[202] **Angela Burns:** Thank you.

[203] **David Rees:** Simon.

[204] **Simon Thomas:** Pe bawn i'n bennaeth ysgol ym Mhorthaethwy, dywedwch, a fyddwn i'n gallu gweld holl ddata ysgol ym Mhenarlâg?
Simon Thomas: If I were a headteacher in Menai Bridge, for example, would I be able to see all the data of a school in Hawarden?

[205] **Mr H. Evans:** Ysgol Porthaethwy yn gallu gweld holl ddata Penarlâg?
Mr H. Evans: A school in Menai Bridge seeing all the data for Hawarden?

[206] **Simon Thomas:** Ie.
Simon Thomas: Yes.

[207] **Mr H. Evans:** Welaf i ddim problem o gwbl yn hynny. Na; ddim o gwbl.
Mr H. Evans: I can't see any problem with that. No; not at all.

[208] **Simon Thomas:** Felly, mae yna rannu data ar draws y consortiwm yn llwyr?
Simon Thomas: So, the data are shared right across the consortium?

[209] **Mr H. Evans:** Mae'r data yn agored i bawb. Rŵan, mae'n amlwg bod yna reolau o gwmpas hynny; mae'n cael ei gyfyngu i lawr. Ni fedrwyd ei rannu i lawr i'r lefel sylfaenol un, ond o ran y data sydd ar gael, mae'r data yn cael eu rhannu ac y maent yn cael eu hadrodd arnynt yn rhanbarthol.

[210] **Simon Thomas:** Sut ydych chi'n defnyddio'r data hynny wedyn i ddarparu cefnogaeth i ysgolion? Beth yw'r canllawiau rydych yn eu defnyddio i benderfynu pa ysgol sydd angen cefnogaeth o fath arbennig, a pha ysgol sydd efallai mewn sefyllfa lle mae'n gallu cynnig cefnogaeth i ysgol arall? Ym mha ffordd ydych chi'n defnyddio'r data ac yn olrhain y data drwy'r system?

[211] **Mr H. Evans:** Yn y lle cyntaf, yn amlwg, mae adnabyddiaeth staff y gwasanaeth o'r ysgol cyn bwysiced ag unrhyw beth. Mae hynny'n hollbwysig ac mae hynny'n rhywbeth rydym angen ei gynnal a'i barhau a'i ddyfnhau fel mae'r amser yn mynd rhagddo. Hefyd, wrth gwrs, mae gennym, fel y gwyddoch, gyfundrefn gategoreiddio genedlaethol. Deilliant y gyfundrefn honno, pan rydych yn edrych ar y data, pan rydych yn edrych ar gynhwysedd yr ysgol a'i gallu i wella ac ati—. Canlyniad terfynol y broses honno yw nid rhoi'r ysgol mewn rhyw fath o gategori i ddweud, 'Nid wyt ti'n ysgol dda' neu 'Mi rwyd ti'n ysgol dda'—canlyniad

Mr H. Evans: The data are open to everyone. Now, obviously there are rules surrounding that; it is locked down. You can't go down to the most basic level of information, but in terms of the data that are available, the data are shared and they are reported on regionally.

Simon Thomas: How do you use those data, then, to provide support for schools? What guidelines do you use to decide which school requires a particular kind of support, and which school is perhaps in a position to provide support to another school? How do you use those data and trace the data through the system?

Mr H. Evans: Firstly, obviously, the awareness of service staff of the school is as important as anything. That's essential and that's something we need to maintain and deepen as time goes on. Also, of course, we have, as you know, the national categorisation system. The outcome of that system, when you look at the data, when you look at the school's capacity and its ability to improve et cetera—. The final outcome of that process is not putting a school in a certain category and saying, 'You're not a good school' or 'You're a good school'—the result is to show what level of support that school deserves within the system.

hynny ydy dangos beth ydy lefel y gefnogaeth y mae'r ysgol yna yn ei haeddu o fewn y gyfundrefn.

[212] Mae honno'n gyfundrefn genedlaethol. Mae'n gyfundrefn newydd. Mae'n gyfundrefn sydd wedi cael ei chreu ar y cyd rhwng y pedwar consortia. Mae hi'n cael ei haddasu fel y mae amser yn mynd rhagddo, ond mae'n gyfundrefn sydd yn ein helpu i wneud yn union beth rydych chi wedi'i ddweud rwan, sef: sut rydych yn symud o sefyllfa lle rydych wedi sbio ar ddata yn foel i ddod â materion eraill i mewn—arweinyddiaeth, dysgu ac addysgu, gallu'r ysgol i symud ei hun yn ei blaen—ac arwain hynny wedyn i mewn i, 'Reit, beth ydy lefel y gefnogaeth y mae'r ysgol yma ei hangen ac yn lle maen nhw angen y gefnogaeth yna?' Ein rôl ni fel gwasanaeth, mewn partneriaeth efo'r awdurdodau lleol, ydy brocera, ym mha bynnag ffordd, y gefnogaeth yna ar gyfer yr ysgol yna a gosod meini prawf llwyddiant clir ac amserlen benodol, peidio â thywallt adnodd ar ôl adnodd ar ôl adnodd, ac wedyn mesur llwyddiant ar ddiwedd y dydd.

[213] **Simon Thomas:** Pan fyddwch yn edrych ar ganlyniad y categoraiddio presennol, fel consortiwm, a ydych yn derbyn ei fod yn gywir, neu a ydych, naill ai fel consortiwm neu ar draws y chwe awdurdod, yn canfod fod ysgolion wedi'u categoraiddio mewn modd arbennig yn y system ac nad ydych

That's a national system. It's a new system. It's a system that's been created collaboratively between the four consortia. It's being adapted as time goes on, but it is a system that is helping us to do exactly what you have just said, which is: how you move from a situation where you have looked at the bare data to bringing in other aspects—leadership, learning and teaching, the school's ability to move itself forward—and lead that on to, 'Right, what level of support does this school need and where do they need that support?' Our role as a service, in partnership with the local authorities, is brokering, in whatever way, that support for that school and then set clear improvement criteria and a specific timetable, not to pour resources after resources after resources, and then measure the success at the end of the day.

Simon Thomas: When you look at the outcomes of the current categorisation system, as a consortium, do you accept that they are accurate, or do you, either as a consortium or across the six authorities, find that there are some schools that are categorised in a particular way within the system

yn ymddiried yn y system ac yn teimlo bod yna ysgol sydd efallai wedi'i phenodi'n lliw arbennig ond yn teimlo, 'Wel, na, o'n hadnabyddiaeth leol ni, mae angen math gwahanol o gefnogaeth ar yr ysgol yma'? Pa mor gaeth ydych chi i ddilyn y categoreiddio?

[214] **Mr H. Evans:** Rwy'n meddwl ei bod yn bwysig ein bod yn deall, yn y sefyllfa yma, yn union beth ydy'r broses o ran y categoreiddio, ac ar ba bwynt yn y broses honno y mae'r wybodaeth leol yna yn cael ei bwydo i mewn. Yn amlwg, rhan gyntaf y broses gategoreiddio—. Os ydych yn ei galw hi'n echel fertigol, neu beth bynnag ydy hi, mae'n diffinio'n llawn ar sail data. Dim ond data. Mae'n cael ei roi i mewn i beiriant, ac mae'n dod allan y pen arall, ac mae rhif yn cael ei gynhyrchu o 1 i 4. Wedyn, rydym yn edrych ar beth yw cymhwysedd yr ysgol i wella ac mae hynny eto yn pwysu llawer ar wybodaeth leol, yr ymgynghorwyr her, ac mae trafodaeth, mewn partneriaeth gydag uwch-swyddogion pob un o'r awdurdodau lleol unigol, sydd yn dod â gwybodaeth ychwanegol i mewn i'r darlun—

[215] **Simon Thomas:** Ar y lefel honno mae'r awdurdodau unigol yn bwydo i mewn.

[216] **Mr Budd:** It is an integrated programme at regional level, then moderated, actually, at national level. So, it isn't a question of having a debate in six different ways with inconsistency within a region. It's a single model.

where you don't have confidence in that categorisation and feel that there is a school that may have been designated a particular colour but you feel, 'Well, no, from our local knowledge, this school needs different support'? How closely do you stick to the categorisation?

Mr H. Evans: I think what's important is that we understand, in that situation, what the process of categorisation is, and at what point in that process is that local knowledge being fed in. Obviously, the first part of the categorisation process—. If you call it the vertical axis, or whatever it is, it defines on the basis of data. Data only. It is fed into a machine, and it comes out the other end, and a number will be generated ranging from 1 to 4. Then, we look at the school's capacity for improvement, and that depends to a great deal upon local information, and challenge advisers, and then there is a discussion, in partnership with senior officers of all local authorities, and that brings additional information to the picture—

Simon Thomas: It's at that level that local authorities come in.

[217] **Simon Thomas:** Canlyniad hynny, felly, yw eich bod yn gallu ymddiried yn y system. Ym mha ffordd ydych chi'n dyrannu'r adnoddau wedyn i gefnogi ysgolion? A ydych chi ond yn cefnogi'r rhai coch ac oren, neu a oes hawl gan bob ysgol, beth bynnag ei lliw, i gael rhyw fath o gefnogaeth ar ryw fath o lefel? Ym mha ffordd ydych chi'n didoli'r gwaith rydych yn ei wneud?

Simon Thomas: The result of that, therefore, is that you are able to trust in the system. In what way do you allocate the resources to support schools? Do you just support those in the red and amber categorisation, or does every school have a right, whatever its categorisation, to receive some kind of support at whatever level? How do you allocate that work that you do?

[218] **Mr H. Evans:** Mae peryglon real ac amlwg mewn trio dilyn fformiwla i ddyrannu adnoddau ar sail categori. Mae categorïau yn ddefnyddiol yn y modd rwyf wedi ei ddisgrifio ichi. Ond mae gennych beth allech ei galw'n ysgol oren gadarn. Neu mae gennych ysgol werdd sydd ar waelod ystod yr ysgolion gwyrdd. So, mae'n fwy na dim ond edrych ar, 'Reit, mae hon yn y categori yma, felly rydym yn mynd i wneud hyn'. Felly, mae yna drafodaeth fwy manwl na hynny ynglŷn â beth yw'r angen.

Mr H. Evans: There are real and clear risks in trying to follow a formula to distribute funding on the basis of categorisation. Categories are useful in the way that I've just described to you. But you can have what you would call an amber school that's performing well. Or you can have a green school that's at the bottom of the range of green schools. It's not just a matter of saying, 'Okay, that school is in that category, so we will do this'. So, there's a more detailed discussion than that on what the needs actually are.

[219] Yng nghyd-destun y gefnogaeth i'r ysgolion gorau—ac mae llawer iawn, iawn o ysgolion da ar draws Cymru, ac yng ngogledd Cymru, wrth gwrs—mae perygl, fel rwyf wedi dweud yn barod yn y cyfarfod hwn, drwy ffocysu ar rai ysgolion yn unigol, eich bod yn tynnu eich llygad oddi ar y bêl o ran ysgolion eraill. Mae'n rhaid tynnu'r teulu cyfan at ei gilydd. Rwyf wedi cyfeirio yn y dystiolaeth ysgrifenedig

In the context of the support for our best performing schools—and there are very many good schools across Wales, and in north Wales, of course—there is a risk, as I've already suggested this morning, in focusing on certain individual schools, that you take your eye off the ball in terms of other schools. We have to bring all of our schools together. I have referred, in our written evidence, to an alternative way of

rydym wedi'i rhoi at arddull gwahanol o weithio rydym yn edrych arno rwan. Mae'n rhaid ichi gael ymgynghorydd her yn gweithio efo ysgol, ond nid yw un pâr o lygad, o angenrheidrwydd, yn help i naill ai herio na chefnogi i'r lefel y buasem ni ei eisiau. Trwy ddod â grŵp o ysgolion at ei gilydd, drwy gyd-herio a chyd-gefnogi efo rheolau clir—meini prawf pendant a phrotocol clir wedi cael eu gosod o'i gwmpas—mae hynny'n mynd i roi lawer mwy o hyder i mi ein bod yn mynd i symud ymlaen o'r sefyllfa yma lle mae gennym y bownsio yma mewn perfformiad rydym yn ei weld.

working that we're looking at now. You do have to have challenge advisers working with schools, but one pair of eyes isn't necessarily going to help to provide the challenge or support that we would want at the level that we would want. By bringing a group of schools together, by challenging jointly with clear rules—with clear protocols and certain yardsticks put in place—then that will give me far more confidence that we are going to move on from this situation where we have this bounce in performance.

11:15

[220] Mae'r arbenigedd gwella ysgolion yn bodoli yng Nghymru: nid oes cwestiwn am hynny, ac mae'r mwyafrif llethol ohono o fewn ein hysgolion ni. Sut ydym yn gwneud gwella'r gyfundrefn gyfan yn waith dydd i ddydd pob un ohonom ni, yn hytrach nag ein bod yn edrych ar y tamaid bach yna? A ydw i'n poeni, bob blwyddyn, a ydy Ynys Môn yn mynd i wneud yn well na Sir y Fflint? Nac ydw; nid wyf. Mi fuasai cyfarwyddwyr addysg y ddau, efallai, yn dweud yn wahanol. A ydw i'n poeni lle mae GwE yn sefyll o'i gymharu â chonsortia eraill? Yn naturiol, oherwydd rydym yn cael ein cymharu, ond nid yw hynny'n ein helpu ni os ydym eisiau symud y

[221] The expertise in school improvement does exist in Wales: there's no doubt about that, and the vast majority of it is within our schools. How do we improve the whole of the system in our day-to-day activity, rather than looking at those minute areas? Am I concerned, every year, that Anglesey is going to perform better than Flintshire? Well, no; I'm not. The directors of education in both authorities may have a different response. Am I concerned about where GwE stands in comparison with other consortia? Well, naturally, because we are compared, but that doesn't help us if we want to move the whole system forward. We must all work together in

gyfundrefn gyfan yn ei blaen. Mae'n rhaid i ni i gyd, efo'n gilydd, gydweithio i symud hwn ac mae'n rhaid i ni dynnu'r ysgolion gorau yma i mewn i'r patrwm yma a'u defnyddio nhw mewn ffordd sy'n caniatáu i'r cynhwysedd yna gael ei ryddhau.

[222] **Simon Thomas:** Un o'r themâu a gafodd ei adnabod yn adroddiad Estyn sy'n rhedeg trwy ysgolion—mae'n amrywio o ysgol i ysgol, ond nid yw i gael jest mewn un ysgol neu ddim i gael mewn un ysgol arall—yw'r ffordd rŷm ni'n cau'r bwlch o ran plant sy'n derbyn prydau ysgol am ddim ac amddifadedd yn gyffredinol a'r ddarpariaeth ar gyfer hynny.

[223] Roeddwn yn gweld yn y dystiolaeth eich bod chi'n sôn am y ffaith bod yna strategaeth ar draws y consortiwm ar gyfer hynny. A oedd y strategaeth yna yn ei lle cyn adroddiad Estyn?

[224] **Mr H. Evans:** Nid yn y fformat rydych chi wedi'i weld yn fanna, rŷan. Rwy'n meddwl ein bod yn cydnabod bod yna faterion—. Beth sydd angen i ni gofio fan hyn, rwy'n meddwl, yw y cafodd y model cenedlaethol ei greu ym mis Chwefror 2014; mi ddaeth Estyn a'r swyddfa archwilio i archwilio'r consortia ym mis Tachwedd/Rhagfyr 2014. Mae yna restr—nid oes angen i mi eu rhannu nhw efo chi fan hyn—hir o flaenoriaethau sydd yn rhaid eu mynd ar eu hôl, ac mae honno'n un

order to make this progress and we have to bring these best-performing schools into this pattern and make use of them in a way that allows that capacity to be released.

Simon Thomas: One of the themes that was recognised in the Estyn report, which runs through schools—it varies from school to school, but it's not just a case of it being in one school or not in another—is how we close the gap in terms of children receiving free school meals and deprivation in general and the provision relating to that.

I saw in your evidence that you talked about the fact that there's a strategy in place across the consortium for that. Was that strategy in place before the Estyn report?

Mr H. Evans: Not in the format that you've seen it there now. I think we have acknowledged that there are issues—. What we need to bear in mind here, I think, is that the national model was created in February 2014; Estyn and the audit office carried out inspections of the consortia in November/December 2014. There is a lengthy list—I don't need to share them with you here—of priorities that we need to get to grips with, and that's a very important one. That strategy wasn't as developed as

bwysig iawn. Nid oedd y strategaeth yna mor ddatblygedig ag y byddem ni eisiau iddi fod. Mae hi erbyn rŵan; mae wedi cael ei rhannu, mae allan yna ac mae'n cynnig nid yn unig strategaeth, ond mae'n cynnig pwyntiau gweithredu o ran sut rydym yn mynd i fynd ar ei ôl, sut rydym yn mynd i adnabod yr arferion gorau, a sut rydym yn mynd i glymu i mewn y math o system y gwnes i ddisgrifio'n gynharach o ran ysgolion yn arwain o fewn y cyd-destun hwn lle mae'r llwyddiannau wedi bod, ac ati. Felly, ni fuaswn i'n anghytuno bod y strategaethau'n annatblygedig pan ddaeth Estyn i mewn, ond, erbyn rŵan, mae'r sefyllfa'n dra gwahanol.

[225] **Simon Thomas:** Mae'r llwyddiant neu beidio o gwmpas y strategaeth hon yn un o'r pethau sy'n gallu sbarduno ysgol i fynd o un categori i'r llall—mae'n un o'r pethau trothwy pendant, ond yw, rhwng un a'r llall.

[226] **Mr H. Evans:** Yn sicr.

[227] **Simon Thomas:** Beth yw'r gwaith fesul ysgol rydych chi'n ei ddarparu, felly, i sicrhau bod hynny yn digwydd? Ac, ar ochr arall y geiniog, fel petai, sut ych chi'n sicrhau nad yw gwaith fel yna yn cau allan y gwaith arall a ddylai ddigwydd mewn ysgolion hefyd?

[228] **Mr H. Evans:** Rydym ni, fel gwasanaeth, a'r awdurdodau lleol, i gyd yn gwybod yn fanwl lle mae'r

we would've liked. It is now; it's been distributed and it provides not only a strategy, but it provides action points in terms of how we're going to get to grips with it, how we're going to identify best practice, and how we're going to incorporate the kind of system that I mentioned earlier in terms of schools leading in this context where they have been successful, and so on. So, I wouldn't disagree that these strategies were at an early stage when Estyn came in, but the situation is very different now.

Simon Thomas: The success or otherwise in relation to this strategy is one of the things that can lead to a school moving from one category to another—it is a definite threshold, isn't it, between one category and another.

Mr H. Evans: Certainly.

Simon Thomas: So, what kind of work are you carrying out school by school, then, to ensure that this happens? And, on the other side of the equation, how can you ensure that that kind of work doesn't preclude the other work that should also be happening in schools?

Mr H. Evans: We, as a service, and the local authorities, all know in detail where the performance gap between

bwlch perfformiad rhwng disgyblion prydau ysgol am ddim a'r lleill yn uwch na'i gilydd. Mae hynny'n caniatáu i ni dargedu'n hadnoddau a'r strategaeth i le mae'r angen fwyaf, ac mae'r wybodaeth yna gennym ni ar lefel ysgolion unigol ar draws y sectorau. Mi fuaswn i'n dweud hefyd, wrth gwrs, yng nghydestun hyn, bod y defnydd o'r grant amddifadedd, beth bynnag fo hyd bywyd hwnnw i'r dyfodol—ac mae'n swm sylweddol o arian—yn rhan greiddiol o'r drafodaeth y mae'r ymgynghorwyr her o fewn y gwasanaeth yn ei chael efo penaethiaid a staff ysgolion pan fônt yn mynd i mewn ac o beth ydy'u strategaeth nhw ar gyfer defnyddio'r gwariant hwnnw, felly.

[229] Rŵan, fel popeth arall, mae yna hyn a hyn o bethau medr unrhyw bennaeth neu unrhyw ysgol eu ffocysu arnyn nhw'n galed dros gyfnod. Ein rôl ni, fel gwasanaeth, yw gwneud yn siŵr, lle mae'n flaenoriaeth, lle mae yna ddiffyg perfformiad, bod hynny'n cael blaenoriaeth yn yr ysgol honno dros bethau eraill mwy ymylol, ond y gallai'r ysgol drio meddwl, 'Mi awn ni i'r cyfeiriad yna, rŵan' felly.

[230] **Mr Budd:** Huw's team are part of the story in terms of a holistic approach to overcoming deprivation. One of the other useful ways in which they've contributed to developing practice within a region is that they have kitemarked effective practice in schools, and have provided opportunities for the schools with effective practice to share that practice with other practitioners across the region. The GwE management board—effectively Huw meeting with the chief education officers—also have an important role

pupils who receive free school meals and the others is higher. That allows us to target our resources and strategy at where the need is greatest, and we have that information at an individual school level across the sectors. I would also say, of course, in the context of all of this, that the use of the pupil deprivation grant, however long that is in existence—and it is a significant sum of money—is a core part of the discussion that the challenge advisers within the service have with headteachers and school staff when they go in and of what their strategies are in terms of how they make use of the pupil deprivation grant.

Now, as with all other things, there are only so many things that any headteacher or any school can focus on in any great depth over a period of time. Our role, as a service, is to ensure that, when there is a problem in terms of performance, that that is given priority in that school over and above more peripheral issues that the school may think, 'We'll actually pursue that instead, now'.

to play to make sure there is a coherent package of support in vulnerable communities and for vulnerable families, ensuring that aspects of the Communities First delivery programme, early years work and family support work, are well organised and delivered for the benefit of individual school communities.

[231] **Simon Thomas:** Diolch. Rŷch chi wedi ateb yn rhannol y cwestiwn yr oeddwn yn mynd i'w ofyn, ond mae yna rai agweddau buaswn i'n licio gofyn amdanynt eto, sef, gan fod y grant amddifadedd yma yn mynd yn uniongyrchol i'r ysgol—. Nid yw'n mynd drwy'r consortiwm o gwbl, ac nid ydych chi'n cael eich dwylo arno, ac nid yw'r awdurdod lleol yn cael ei ddwylo arno, ond yn beth bach, efallai. Felly, ym mha ffordd, ymhellach i'r peth yr ydych newydd ei ddweud, a ŷch chi'n sicrhau bod ysgol yn dilyn arfer da ac yn gwneud y pethau sydd wedi cael eu profi i weithio mewn cyddestunau tebyg eraill? Hefyd, ar lefel consortiwm, a ydych chi'n cymharu eich strategaeth â chonsortia eraill? A ydych chi o'r farn bod yna gysondeb ar draws Cymru yn y ffordd y mae'r grant yma yn cael ei ddefnyddio, ac yn y dulliau sy'n cael eu hargymell?

Simon Thomas: Thank you. You have in part answered the question that I was going to ask next, but there are some aspects that I would like to ask again about, which are, given that the pupil deprivation grant goes directly to the school—. It doesn't go through the consortium at all, you don't get your hands on it, and the local authority's not involved in it either, or only to a small extent, perhaps. So, in what way, further to what you've just said, can you ensure that a school does follow good practice and does the things that have been proven to work in similar contexts? In addition to that, on a consortium level, do you compare your strategy to those of other consortia? Is it your view that there is consistency across Wales in the way that this grant is being deployed, and in the methods that are being recommended?

[232] **Mr Budd:** We expect there to be a clear focus within schools' self-evaluations and improvement planning. We expect there to be a similar focus in relation to local authority improvement planning in terms of themes over geographical areas. Those are the main mechanisms that we have for tracking effective outcomes and making a difference for learners and for the wider community.

[233] **David Rees:** Can I clarify? You say you 'expect'; does it happen?

[234] **Mr Budd:** Right. If we are identifying individual schools where there is

a gap between aspirations, expectations and what they're actually delivering, and the outcomes being achieved, that's where the important role comes in for the challenge adviser in terms of the relationship with the individual school, making sure the school is identifying the right issues to be working on in the right way in terms of their self-evaluation and improvement plan. That's the system design, and then we could take that down to stories about individual schools in communities.

[235] **Mr H. Evans:** I think it's vitally important that every challenge adviser when they visit every school has to report to us on this. It's just too important. Whether that be a strength or whether it be a weakness within that school, it has to be something that is looked at for every single school. It's not something that can be avoided.

[236] **Mr Budd:** And in terms of youngsters who are from families who are eligible for free school meals, those challenge conversations go down to that individual pupil level, and that does test sometimes the understanding of the school leadership team around the progress of individual learners, but we expect that level of knowledge and understanding about each learner.

[237] **David Rees:** I often wonder why people say 'expect'. I sometimes think if we 'demand' something it's more important.

[238] **Mr Budd:** It's a good point.

[239] **David Rees:** Okay, Simon?

[240] **Simon Thomas:** I'm finished, Chair.

[241] **David Rees:** Keith.

[242] **Keith Davies:** Roeddech chi'n sôn am y swyddfa archwilio, a rŷch chi wedi eu hateb nhw. Un o'r pethau roedden nhw'n sôn amdano, wrth gwrs, oedd ricriwtio arweinwyr uwch, neu ricriwtio pobl dros y cyrciwlwm, a bod camau cyfyngedig wedi cael eu cymryd. A ŷch chi wedi newid y system sydd gennych? A oes problemau wedi bod gennych?

Keith Davies: You mentioned the audit office, and that you've responded to them. One of the things that they were mentioning was recruiting senior leaders, or recruiting people across the curriculum, and that limited steps have been taken. Have you changed the system that you have in place? Have you had problems? You were

Roeddech chi'n sôn am swyddi parhaol llawn amser; beth am swyddi parhaol nad yw'n llawn amser, ac yn y blaen? Beth yw'ch stwythur chi?

[243] **Mr H. Evans:** Mi fyddwch chi'n ymwybodol, ac mae o'n ffaith digwestiwn, pan sefydlwyd y consortia, roedd penodi i swyddi o fewn y strwythurau newydd, ac nad oedd yn syml. Mi oedd o'n her i unigolion—wrth ystyried eu bod wedi gwneud y gwaith yma am hyn o hyn o amser, maen nhw'n ymwybodol o beth yw'r gwaith, maen nhw'n deall beth ydy o—drio am swydd barhaol, â'r risg sy'n ymwneud â hynny, mewn sefydliad oedd eto i'w brofi, oedd ei hirhoedledd mewn cwestiwn, ac nad oedd neb yn sicr ynglŷn â lle oeddem yn mynd. Felly, mi oedd y cwestiwn o hynny, ac mi oedd yna her i'r rheini a wnaeth cymryd y naid honno, wedyn, i greu digon o hyder o fewn y cyfundrefn addysg fel y byddai ein pobl orau ni yn trio.

[244] Rŵan, i'm golwg i, ac rwy'n gwybod i olwg y rheolwyr gyfarwyddwyr eraill yn ystod y ddwy flynedd diwethaf, mae'r ffordd y mae'r consortia yn cael eu gweld wedi newid. Buaswn i'n dweud wrthy'ch yn onest heddiw, os ydw i yn chwilio am ymgynghorydd her cynradd newydd, bydd penaethiaid cynradd gorau gogledd Cymru ymhlith y rhai a fydd yn trio am y

talking about permanent full-time posts; but what about permanent posts that aren't full time, and so on? Can you explain a little about your structure?

Mr H. Evans: You will be aware, and it's a fact, that, when the consortia were established, appointments were made within the new structures, which wasn't a simple process. It was a challenge for individuals—considering that they'd been doing this work for a number of years, they knew what the role was and understood that role—to apply for a permanent post, with the risks attached to that, in an institution that was yet to be tested, and whose longevity was in question, and when no-one was sure where we were going. So, there were those questions, and there was a challenge for those who actually did take that leap of faith, then, to generate sufficient confidence within the education system that our best candidates would apply for those posts.

Now, in my view, and I know I the view of the other managing directors during the past two years, the way that the consortia are perceived has changed. I would tell you honestly today that, if I am seeking a new challenge adviser in the primary sector, then the finest headteachers in the primary sector in north Wales will be among those applying for that post, without question. The recent

swyddi hynny, yn ddi-gwestiwn. Mae'r cylch penodi sydd wedi digwydd yn ddiweddar wedi cadarnhau hynny.

round of appointments has confirmed that.

[245] Mae llawer iawn o hyn hefyd, wrth gwrs—. Pan ydych yn dod i edrych ar y sector uwchradd, mae yna heriau mawr gennym ni ynglŷn â'r gwahaniaethau cyflog sydd yna, gyda phenaethiaid uwchradd yn ennill efallai £100,000 a mwy, tra bo ymgynghorydd her yn ennill efallai hanner hynny. Rŵan te, mae hynny yn ei hun yn her. Rydym wedi recriwtio penaethiaid uwchradd yn llwyddiannus i mewn i'r gyfundrefn yng ngogledd Cymru—rhai ohonyn nhw i swyddi parhaol oherwydd eu bod yn barod i wneud rhywbeth gwahanol ac maen nhw wedi cymryd cnoc ganlyniadol yn eu cyflog. Ond mae'r her yna yn parhau.

Much of this also, of course—. When you turn to look at the secondary sector, we have major challenges in terms of the differentials in pay, with secondary heads earning perhaps £100,000 and more, while a challenge adviser might earn half of that. Now, that in and of itself is a challenge. We have recruited secondary headteachers successfully into the system in north Wales—some of them into permanent roles because they are ready to take on a different responsibility and they have taken the subsequent knock in terms of salary. But that challenge remains.

[246] Rydych yn sôn wedyn am arbenigedd penodol, rwy'n cymryd, mewn meysydd cwricwlwm ac ati. Un o'r pethau, wrth gwrs, sydd angen ei gofio yn y maes hwnnw ydy, pan grëwyd y gwasanaeth i ddechrau, mi oedd yna ymgais benodol gan y chwe awdurdod lleol i symud o gyfeiriad lle oedd gennych chi arbenigwr pwnc yn eistedd tu ôl i ddesg, ac, os oedd yna unrhyw gwestiwn yn codi o ran unrhyw bwnc, mi oedd rhywun yn y fanna a oedd yn mynd allan i ddatrys y broblem, a dyna fel ag yr oedd hi. Mae yna lot o bobl dda iawn, iawn wedi gwneud y gwaith yna. Ond fel cyfundrefn, ac efo'r adnodd a oedd

You went on to talk about particular areas of expertise, I take it, in the curriculum areas and so on. One of the things, of course, that we need to bear in mind in that context is that, when the service was first established, there was a specific effort from the six local authorities to move away from a position where you had a subject expert sitting behind a desk, and, if any question were raised about any subject, there would be somebody there who could go out there and solve the problem, and that's how it was. Many excellent people have been involved in that work. But, as a regime, and with the

gennym ni, y gydnabyddiaeth yng ngogledd Cymru ac mewn llefydd eraill oedd, fedr hynny ddim parhau.

resource that we had, what we realised in north Wales and elsewhere was that that system couldn't continue.

[247] Rŵan, mae'n rhaid inni edrych ar ffyrdd gwahanol o weithio; mae'n rhaid inni edrych ar ddefnyddio ysgolion, lle mae yna arbenigedd mewn gwahanol feysydd, i weithio efo ysgolion eraill. Mae'n rhaid inni—ac i mi, mae hwn yn fater i'r Llywodraeth hefyd—fuddsoddi yn y gyfundrefn ddigon cynnar i ganiatáu i'r cynhwysedd gael ei greu. Byddai'n dda i ddim i fi fynd at ysgol a dweud, 'Rydw i eisiau i rywun o dy ysgol di i fynd i gefnogi rhywun arall'. Pwy sy'n mynd i ddysgu'r plant yn yr ysgol honno? Mae'n rhaid inni fuddsoddi digon ymlaen llaw i gynyddu'r cynhwysedd i ganiatáu i'r ysgolion yna rhyddhau heb fod angen effeithio ar y dosbarthiadau yn ôl yn yr ysgol.

Now, we have to look at new ways of working; we have to look at using schools, where there is expertise in different areas, to work with other schools. We must—and for me, this is also an issue for the Government—invest in the system at an early enough stage to allow that capacity to be created. It would be no good for me to go to a school and say, 'I want someone from your school to work in another school'. Who is going to teach the children in that school? We must invest sufficiently in advance to ensure that we have the capacity in place to allow those schools to release their staff without it having an impact on the classrooms.

[248] So, mae yna brosesau felly yn eu lle, ond buaswn yn cydnabod yn syth fod athrawon wedi troi rownd a dweud wrthyf, 'Ble mae dy ymgynghorydd Ffrangeg di? Ble mae dy ymgynghorydd drama di?' Buaswn i'n gallu penodi'r bobl yma i gyd pe buasai rhywun yn rhoi'r arian i mi, ond pe byddwn i'n troi'r cloc yn ôl, nid wyf wedi fy mherswadio y byddai hynny'n gwella beth sydd gennym ni ar hyn o bryd. Rwyf wedi dweud yn barod bod yr arbenigedd gwella ysgolion gennym ni ac mae o tu mewn ein hysgolion ni. Mae'n rhaid inni roi'r cynhwysedd i'r ysgolion yna

So, there are such processes in place, but I would acknowledge straight away that teachers have turned to me and said, 'Where's your adviser on French? Where's your adviser on drama?' I would be able to appoint all of these people if someone were to give me the money, but if I were to turn the clock back, I'm not persuaded that that would improve what we currently have. I have already said that the expertise for school improvement exists and it exists within our schools. We must give the schools the ability to release that to work with other schools.

i'w rhyddhau o i weithio efo ysgolion eraill.

[249] **Keith Davies:** So ym mha ffordd y mae hynny'n digwydd? Achos gwnaeth rhywun gwyno i fi y llynedd nad oedd ymgynghorydd mathemateg yn y gogledd o gwbl rhwng y chwe awdurdod. So, os byddai pennaeth â phroblem yn yr adran fathemateg, ar bwy y byddai'n gallu galw i'w helpu yn yr ysgol?

[250] **Mr H. Evans:** Mae'n ffeithiol gywir, yr hyn yr ydych yn ei ddweud. Buaswn i'n gallu dyfynnu rheseidiau o enghreifftiau lle mae'r ysgolion, i gymryd mathemateg fel pwnc, sydd yn arwain y gad, wedi cynnig cefnogaeth ryfeddol i ysgolion nad ydynt felly, drwy wahanol systemau. Mae gennym ysgolion cyd-arweiniol ar draws y gogledd—dyna'r terminoleg rydym ni'n ei ddefnyddio; mae rhanbarthau eraill yn defnyddio termau gwahanol—lle maen nhw'n arwain ar ryw feysydd penodol.

[251] Mae yna ysgolion sydd wedi arwain ar ddelifro hyfforddiant ar gyfer cyrsiau TGAU newydd mathemateg, Cymraeg a Saesneg. Mae hynny'n cynyddu cynhwysedd y gyfundrefn o fewn yr ysgolion, nid o fewn fy nhîm i, ond rwyf i angen y bobl sydd yn gwybod lle mae'r arbenigedd ac yn gallu mynd ato fo, ond mae'n hollol, hollol hanfodol fod gan yr ysgol yna'r gallu i wneud y gwaith yna ar ben y *day job*. Mae honno'n her inni gyd: sut ydym yn

Keith Davies: So how does that happen? Because someone complained to me last year that there was no mathematics adviser in north Wales at all between the six authorities. So, if a headteacher did have a problem in the mathematics department, to whom could they turn to help them in their school?

Mr H. Evans: What you say is factually correct. I could quote numerous examples of schools where schools, to take maths as a subject, that are in the vanguard, have provided astonishing support for those schools that aren't necessarily up to that standard, by means of various systems. We have co-leading schools across north Wales—that is the terminology we use; other regions use different terms—where they lead in specific areas.

There are schools that have led on the delivery of training for the new GCSE courses for mathematics, Welsh and English. That increases system capacity within the schools, not within my team, but I need those people who know where the expertise lies and who can access that expertise, but it is crucially important that that school has the capacity to provide that support on top of the day job. That is a challenge for us all: how do we invest

buddsoddi'n ddigon cynnar yn yr at an early enough stage in those
ysgolion yna, yn hytrach na dod atyn schools, rather than approaching
nhw heddiw—'Reit. Dyma i chi hyn a them today—'Well, here's a few
hyn o filoedd; rwyf i eisiau i chi thousand; I want you to release
rhyddhau rhywun fory'? someone tomorrow'?

[252] **Mr Budd:** Many schools do have the capacity to broker appropriate subject support for themselves. One of the other key tasks for Huw's team is to—where the schools are struggling to identify likely partners and likely sources of support—actually help broker that on their behalf.

[253] Going back to your original question, though, around the WAO's study, they may also be pointing backwards to an issue that we did have in GwE in its early days. As an adviser to the joint committee and as a member of the management board. We took a very conscious decision to make interim arrangements until such time as we could secure high-quality candidates for each of the leadership positions within the consortium. A conscious decision; I'm confident it was the right one and I'm confident that we have a very good leadership team in place across the consortium.

11:30

[254] **Keith Davies:** Un peth rydych **Keith Davies:** One thing that you have
wedi doddi yn eich adroddiad yw eich put in your report is that you have
bod chi wedi newid y system changed the governance system and
llywodraethu a'ch bod chi'n rhoi mwy that you're giving headteachers more
o annibyniaeth i benaethiaid. A independence. Can you explain that?
allwch chi esbonio hynny?

[255] **Mr H. Evans:** Gallaf. Nid y **Mr H. Evans:** Yes, I can. It's not the
system lywodraethu; y trefniadau— governance system; the
arrangements—

[256] **Keith Davies:** Llywodraethu'r **Keith Davies:** I meant governing the
consortia roeddwn i'n feddwl. consortia.

[257] **Mr H. Evans:** Ie, sut rydym yn **Mr H. Evans:** Yes, how we work with
gweithio efo ysgolion. Eto, i gyfeirio schools. Again, referring back, and
yn ôl, ac efallai ailadrodd rhyw perhaps repeating some of what I've
fymryn ar yr hyn rwyf wedi'i ddweud already said, we are aware that we
yn barod, rydym yn ymwybodol na can't continue to increase capacity

fedrwn ni barhau i gynyddu capasiti yn ganolog er mwyn delifro agenda. Mae'n rhaid i ni gael ysgolion yn gweithio efo ni ar graidd agenda gwella ysgol. Felly, pan wnes i gyfeirio yn gynharach at gyd-herio a chyd-gefnogi, mae gennym ni grwpiau o ysgolion rŵan sy'n edrych ar gynlluniau datblygu ei gilydd; sy'n edrych ar hunan-arfarniadau ei gilydd; sy'n edrych ar becynnau data ei gilydd—mae'r rhain i gyd yn cael eu rhannu—ac yn dod at ei gilydd wedyn, yn herio: 'Lle mae dy gryfder di; lle mae fy nghryfder i?' yn hollol onest. Mae protocolau clir wedi cael eu gosod yn amlwg o gwmpas maes a allai fod yn dra sensitif, ac mae'n rhaid i mi ddweud bod penaethiaid gogledd Cymru wedi gafael yn hwn ac maen nhw'n awyddus iawn i symud hwn ymlaen ar draws y sectorau cynradd, arbennig ac uwchradd.

[258] Rŵan, rydym wedi cyfeirio heddiw at risg. Mae yna risg i ni fel gwasanaeth—gydag unrhyw beth rydych yn ei drosglwyddo allan o ran cyfrifoldeb, ond, os crëwch chi gyfundrefn lle mae cydatebolrwydd, lle mae penaethiaid yn dechrau teimlo 'Yn fy ngrŵp i o chwe ysgol, rwyf eisiau'r chwech yna i lwyddo ac rwyf wedi helpu a gwneud fy rhan yn fanna', mae'n dechrau torri lawr y ffiniau yma, achos mae yna ffiniau artiffisial iawn. Byddwn yn deffro yn Wrecsam ar ddiwedd mis Awst, a'r unig beth oedd yn fy mhoeni oedd y dylai Ysgol Morgan Llwyd, yr ysgol

centrally in order to deliver an agenda. We have to have schools working with us on the core agenda of school improvement. So, when I referred earlier to co-challenging and supporting each other, we have groups of schools now that are looking at each other's development plans; that are looking at each other's self-evaluation; are looking at their own data packages—all of these are shared—and come together afterwards, challenging: 'Where is your strength; where's my strength?' entirely honestly. Clear protocols have been put in place around certain areas that could be very sensitive, and I have to say that headteachers in north Wales have got a grasp of this and are very eager to progress it across the primary, special and secondary sectors.

Now, we've referred this morning to risk. There is a risk for us as a service—with anything that you transfer out in terms of responsibility, but, if you create a system where there is joint accountability, where headteachers start to feel, 'Within my group of six schools, I want all of those six schools to succeed and I have helped and played my part there', then it does start to break down these barriers, because there are very artificial barriers in place. I would wake up in Wrexham at the end of August, and the only thing that

roeddwn yn bennaeth arni, wneud yn well nag ysgolion eraill. Nid yw hynny'n ein helpu ni, nac ydy, ar ddiwedd y dydd? Rwy'n dweud wrth benaethiaid drwy'r amser, 'Rwyf eisiau i fy ysgol i fod yn ysgol dda; rwyf eisiau i bob ysgol i fod yn ysgol dda; rwyf eisiau fy ysgol i fod bach yn well, ond dyna'r cyfan.'

concerned me was that Ysgol Morgan Llwyd, the school where I was head, was performing better than other schools. That doesn't help us, does it, at the end of the day? I keep telling headteachers, 'I want my school to be good school; I want every school to be a good school; I want my school to be a little better, but that is all.'

[259] **Keith Davies:** Rydych wedi fy atgoffa am rywbeth nawr—

Keith Davies: You've reminded me of something now—

[260] **Mr Budd:** The collaborative and co-operative nature of our approach is in the DNA of the governance arrangements for the consortium, all the way through to the operational aspects of delivery with our partners in schools.

[261] **Keith Davies:** Un o'r pethau mae'r pwyllgor wedi edrych arno yn y flwyddyn ddiwethaf yw athrawon cyflenwi, a bod problemau gyda ni gydag athrawon cyflenwi. Ydy'r consortia yn gwneud rhywbeth â hynny, neu ai'r awdurdodau unigol sy'n penderfynu?

Keith Davies: One of the things that the committee has looked at during the last year is supply teachers, and that we have problems with supply teachers. Are the consortia doing anything with that, or is it up to the individual authorities to decide?

[262] **Mr H. Evans:** Do you want to take it first, Ian?

[263] **Mr Budd:** Okay. It is an area that we haven't had a major focus on as a consortium. We have made some developments in relation to HR policy development and practical advice for schools. We now have a network of education practitioners across the region, who also have representation in terms of the equivalent national model in development of policy frameworks and practice in HR. But, no, it hasn't been a major area of concern in terms of our collective self-evaluation, the availability of supply teaching, and it hasn't been an area of collective practice.

[264] **Keith Davies:** The reason I ask it is that Huw was talking there about groups of schools working together. We talk about the problems of supply teachers, and I thought, well, if groups of schools are working together,

that's one way of solving it.

[265] **Mr H. Evans:** Byddwn yn dweud i ddechrau bod angen i'r math yma o waith fod yn rhan greiddiol o waith yr ysgol. Mae herio, cefnogi, arfarnu, cynllunio datblygiad a chynllunio gwelliant yn rhan greiddiol o waith yr ysgolion. Rwy'n ymwybodol, fel arweinydd y consortiwm yn y gogledd, bod perygl, wrth i ni gynnig hyfforddiant ar hyn, hyfforddiant ar y llall, rhaglenni datblygu ar hyn, rhaglenni datblygu ar y llall, ein bod ni'n tynnu pobl allan o ysgolion, fel sydd wedi digwydd erioed—hyfforddiant y cydbwyllgor addysg mewn cwrs newydd ac yn y blaen. Rydym yn tynnu pobl allan; mae angen ffeindio athrawon cyflenwol; a oes yna ddiffyg a phroblemau o ran cael pobl dda ac yn y blaen? Dyna pam—ac rwy'n dod yn ôl at hyn eto—bod rhaid i ni edrych ar beth yw cynhwysedd y system i wneud beth rydym yn disgwyl iddi wneud. Mae hynny'n golygu, yn hytrach na'n bod ni'n buddsoddi'n hwyr yn y dydd efo grantiau munud olaf—a fi yw'r cyntaf i ddeall yn iawn beth yw rhwystredigaethau'r gyfundrefn ariannu rydym yn gweithio oddi mewn iddi—rhaid inni fuddsoddi'n gynt yn y pethau hynny rydym angen eu datblygu. Rhaid peidio â disgwyl, wrth fod arian yn dod i mewn, sy'n cyrraedd yn sydyn ar stepen y drws heddiw, ein bod ni'n gallu ei fuddsoddi fory, a'n bod yn gallu ei dynnu yn ôl allan o'r ysgol y diwrnod wedyn. Nid fel hynny mae addysg yn

Mr H. Evans: I would say first of all that this kind of work needs to be a core part of the work of the school's work. Challenging, supporting, evaluating, planning development and planning improvement are a core part of the schools' work. I'm aware, as the leader of the consortium in north Wales, that there is a risk, as we provide training on this, training on the other, development programmes on this, development programmes on the other, that we are taking people out of schools, as has always happened. Training by the joint education committee on a new course, and so on. We are taking people out; we need to find supply teachers then; is there a shortage and a problem in getting good people and so on? That is why—and I come back to this again—we need to look at the capacity of the system to deliver what we expect it to deliver. That does mean, rather than investing late in the day with last-minute grants—and I am the first to understand what the frustrations of the funding system that we're working within are—that we have to invest earlier in those things that we need to develop. We can't expect, when the money lands on our doorstep today, to make a difference if we invest it tomorrow and withdraw it from the school the next day. That is not how education works. You have to invest to improve.

gweithio. Rhaid ichi fuddsoddi i wella.

[266] **David Rees:** Aled, a small point?

[267] **Aled Roberts:** Roeddech yn cyfeirio at adnoddau ariannol; faint ydych wedi gwario fel gwasanaeth ar gynlluniau diswyddo staff, er mwyn inni gymharu? Os ydych wedi gwario arian ar hynny, a oedd hynny'n dod o'ch cyllideb chi neu a oedd gofyn ar gynghorau unigol i dalu'n ychwanegol i mewn i ryw bot?

Aled Roberts: You referred to financial resources; how much have you spent as a service on redundancy programmes for staff, just for comparison's sake? If you have spent money on that, did that come out of your budget or did you turn to the individual authorities to pay additionally into some kind of pot for that?

[268] **Mr Budd:** At the point of setting up the current school improvement arrangements, there was available to us a transitional grant from the Welsh Government, which supported transitional changes in staffing.

[269] **Aled Roberts:** How much did you spend?

[270] **Mr H. Evans:** Fe ddylwn i ddweud, mi oedd yna gynllun ar y dechrau, ond nid yw'r ffigurau gennyf—roedd cyn fy amser i yn GwE. Fe roedd buddsoddiad gan y chwe awdurdod i greu gwasanaeth a oedd yn llai na beth oedd y gwasanaeth o'r blaen ac roedd yna gostau adleoli. Nid yw'r rheiny gennyf fan hyn. Nid wyf yn mynd i wneud ffigur i fyny.

Mr H. Evans: I should state that there was a plan at the outset, but I don't have the figures with me—it was before my time at GwE. There was an investment by the six authorities to create a service that was smaller than what had previously existed, and there were relocation costs attached to that as well. I don't have that figure. I'm not going to make a figure up.

[271] **Aled Roberts:** A allech chi roi nodyn i ni?

Aled Roberts: Could you send us a note?

[272] **Mr H. Evans:** Fe fedrwn ni gael y ffigur i chi. Ers i GwE gael ei sefydlu fel gwasanaeth, nid ydym wedi adleoli neb o'r gwasanaeth ein

Mr H. Evans: We can get that figure to you, certainly. Since GwE was established as a service, we haven't relocated anybody from the service

hunain. Fe allai hynny newid yn dibynnu ar beth yw'r setliad ariannol a allai ddod.

ourselves. That could change depending on the financial settlement in the future.

[273] **David Rees:** If you could provide the committee with that information, it would be very helpful. Bethan.

[274] **Bethan Jenkins:** Rwyf eisiau gofyn ynglŷn â—roeddech yn gwrando ar y cwestiynau yn gynharach—sut rydych yn gweithio â llywodraethwyr ysgol. A oes gennych broses glir ynglŷn â sut rydych yn ymgynghori â nhw neu eu helpu fel rhan o'r broses hon?

Bethan Jenkins: I want to ask about—you were listening to the earlier questions—how you work with school governors. Do you have a clear process about how you engage with them or support them as part of this process?

[275] **Mr H. Evans:** Mae dau ateb i hynny. O ran presenoldeb a chynrychiolaeth llywodraethwyr o fewn cyfundrefn GwE, mae'r llywodraethwyr yn cael eu cynrychioli ar grŵp defnyddwyr GwE a hefyd ar gyd-bwyllgor GwE. Felly, maen nhw'n bresennol yn nhrefodaethau sylfaenol y cyd-bwyllgor a'r awdurdodau. Mae ganddynt gynrychiolaeth. Mae pob un o'r grwpiau unigol ar draws pob un o'r awdurdodau lleol yn gyrru cynrychiolydd i'r grŵp defnyddwyr. Fe gawsant drafodaeth yn y grŵp hynny ynglŷn â chreu grŵp ar wahân i'r llywodraethwyr. Mae grŵp defnyddwyr GwE yn cynnwys penaethiaid yn ogystal â llywodraethwyr. Ond, mi roedd y llywodraethwyr eu hunain yn hynod o awyddus i aros yn rhan o'r grŵp ehangach, yn hytrach na chael eu grŵp eu hunain.

Mr H. Evans: There are two answers here. One, in terms of attendance and representation of governors within the GwE system, the governors are represented on the GwE user group and also on the GwE joint committee. So, they do attend the discussions of the joint committee and the authorities. They are represented there. Each of the individual groups across the local authorities sends a representative to the user group. They had a discussion in that group about creating a separate group for governors. The current GwE user group includes heads as well as governors. But, the governors themselves wanted to remain part of the wider group, rather than formulating their own.

[276] Felly, mae'r holl ddatblygiadau Therefore, all policy developments,

polisi, y math o bethau rydym wedi'u trafod yn y fan hyn ynglŷn â'r dull newydd o weithio ac yn y blaen, mae hynny wedi mynd drwy'r fforymau yma i gyd ac mae'r llywodraethwyr wedi cael eu mewnbwn i hynny. Byddwn i'n dweud bod cwestiwn bob amser ynglŷn â faint o'r wybodaeth yma, sy'n mynd yn ôl ac ymlaen o fewn systemau cynrychioladol llywodraethwyr, sy'n mynd yn ôl i lawr i grwpiau unigol o llywodraethwyr mewn ysgolion unigol. Mae hynny'n rhywbeth rydym eisiau edrych arno efo'n cynrychiolwyr. Ar wahân i hynny, mae gennym hefyd y gyfundrefn datblygu llywodraethwyr. Fe wnaiff Ian sôn am hynny rwan.

the kinds of things that we've been talking about in terms of new ways of working and so on, have gone through all of these fora and the governors have had an input into that. I would say that there is always a question in terms of how much of this information, conveyed back and forth in the representative fora for governors, goes back to individual groups of governors in individual schools. That is something we will need to look at with our representatives. Apart from that, we also have a system for the development of governors. Ian will cover that now.

[277] **Mr Budd:** In terms of GwE's responsibilities, one of the things it has in its recent developments is quality assuring the training and development opportunities there are for governors across the region, many of which are actually delivered in partnership and through Governors Wales. So, we have that programme in place and it is quality assured for consistency in terms of support and quality across the region. Other than that, the collaborative and co-operative ethos that we're talking about in the governance arrangements means that governors and headteachers are appropriately represented in user groups and higher governance arrangements. But, that's also extended as a principle in relation to diocesan authorities and close engagement and partnership working with trade unions as well, which we may come on to. It is an open system in terms of school improvement in north Wales. We think that all of the stakeholders within the system need to have a sense of ownership of the school improvement programme and the opportunity to contribute their various skills collaboratively.

[278] **Bethan Jenkins:** With the diocese particularly, do you discuss individual policy issues, because I know that, in some areas, school transport has been a particular issue for that sector? Would that be something that you would raise in that forum, or would that be down to the single local authority only?

[279] **Mr Budd:** We do discuss a number of issues in common across the

region. We now have a mechanism at national level for doing that as well between the Welsh Government, local authority representatives and diocesan representatives. So, we've got a new mechanism in place at national level to do that. We have liaison arrangements at regional level, and then there are also individual authority arrangements. Transport is one that is dealt with largely at local authority level, given that, at this point, we're talking about the individual authority transport entitlements largely as the area of controversy with the diocese.

[280] **Bethan Jenkins:** Okay.

[281] I symud ymlaen, felly, i'r trafodaethau gyda'r undebau llafur, rydym wedi clywed gan NASUWT bod ERW yn ymgysylltu gyda'r sector ond bod trafodaethau anodd yn digwydd yno. Fodd bynnag, nid yw'r consortia eraill yn cael rhywbeth strwythuredig gyda'r undebau llafur. A ydych chi wedi siarad â chonsortia eraill ynglŷn â sut i ddysgu o'r hyn y maent yn ei wneud, neu sut y gallwch addasu'r hyn sydd yn digwydd?

Moving on, therefore, to the discussions with the trade unions, we have heard from the NASUWT that ERW is engaging with the sector but there are difficult discussions there. However, the other consortia do not seem to have a structured engagement with the trade unions. Have you talked with other consortia about how to learn from what they're doing, or to see how you can adapt what is currently going on?

[282] **Mr H. Evans:** Rwy'n deall beth yr ydych yn ei ddweud. Nid wyf yn hollol siŵr o ble y mae'r NAS wedi cael y datganiad hwnnw, a bod yn onest—

Mr H. Evans: I understand your point. I'm not entirely sure where the NAS has obtained that statement from, to be honest—

[283] **Bethan Jenkins:** Yr NASUWT. **Bethan Jenkins:** The NASUWT.

[284] **Mr H. Evans:**—neu o ble y mae'r NASUWT wedi cael y datganiad hwnnw.

Mr H. Evans: [*Continues.*]—or where the NASUWT has obtained that statement from.

[285] **Bethan Jenkins:** Mae'r NAS yn wahanol.

Bethan Jenkins: The NAS is different.

[286] **Mr H. Evans:** Mae'r NAS yn wahanol.

Mr H. Evans: The NAS is different.

[287] **Bethan Jenkins:** Roeddwn i jyst am wneud yn siŵr.

Bethan Jenkins: I just wanted to make sure.

[288] **Mr H. Evans:** Nid wyf yn siŵr o ble y mae'r NASUWT wedi cael y neges honno oherwydd mae'r NASUWT yn cael eu cynrychioli yn gyson ar fforwm undebau gogledd Cymru ac rydw i a'r cadeirydd yn ei fynychu. Mae gennym ddatganiad ar wefan GwE, sydd wedi cael ei gytuno gyda'r undebau i gyd o ran beth ydy rôl GwE, beth ydy rôl GwE mewn perthynas â'r undebau llafur, beth ydy rôl GwE mewn perthynas ag Estyn, a beth yw'r gwahaniaeth o safbwynt arolygu gwasanaeth gwella ysgolion ac ati. Mae'r datganiad hwnnw wedi cael ei gytuno ar y cyd rhyngom ni a'r undebau llafur. Felly, rwy'n deall beth yr ydych yn ei ddweud, ond nid wyf yn hollol siŵr bod pwy bynnag sydd wedi rhannu'r wybodaeth honno â chi wedi cael trafodaeth gyda chynrychiolydd yr NASUWT yng ngogledd Cymru, os ydym yn trafod yr un peth, felly.

Mr H. Evans: I'm not sure how the NASUWT have come up with that statement, because they are regularly represented on the north Wales unions forum, and myself and the chair attend the meetings. We have a statement on the GwE website, which has been agreed with all of the unions in terms of the role of GwE, the role of GwE in relation to the trade unions, the role of GwE in relation to Estyn, and what the difference is in terms of inspecting the school improvement service and so on. That statement has been jointly agreed between ourselves and the trade unions. Therefore, I do understand your point, but I'm not entirely sure that whoever gave you that information has had discussions with the NASUWT representative in north Wales, if we are discussing the same issue.

[289] **Bethan Jenkins:** Wel, mae'n amlwg bod hwn yn rhywbeth i ni fynd yn ôl at yr NASUWT, ond a ydych yn cael y problemau, fel y dywedais yn gynharach, ynglŷn â thrafod pethau nad ydynt o fewn *remit* y consortia, ond efallai sydd yn haws i chi eu trafod—er enghraifft, amodau gwaith, ac yn y blaen—fel bod pob awdurdod lleol yn cael rhyw fath o syniad, neu gonsensws, ar yr hyn sydd yn digwydd yn hynny o beth?

Bethan Jenkins: Well, obviously, this is something that we would need to check with the NASUWT, but do you find that there are difficulties, as I said earlier, with discussing things that may not be in the remit of the consortia, but may be easier for you to discuss—such as working conditions, for example—so that each local authority can have some idea, or for there to be some consensus on what's happening

there?

[290] **Mr Budd:** Just a few points that relate to that. I actually think that it is a real credit and a real strength that the careful attention that we put into building protocols, building social partnership with the unions in the early stages of developing the consortia, have been followed through and are really present in terms of the regular working arrangements that you have, and the regular meetings that you have, Huw, with union colleagues within the region.

[291] **Bethan Jenkins:** I suppose regular meetings are different to the outcomes of those meetings, and how those policies are reflected.

[292] **Mr Budd:** That's the second point. Yes. I mentioned that one of the more recent developments within the region is to have the network of HR lead practitioners with a shared work programme in terms of policy development and negotiation within the region, with a link into an equivalent work programme at national level that's owned by the Welsh Local Government Association. The councillors' side of the operation is also owned by the HR directors' network and ADEW. So, we now have that more coherent way of reviewing policies, and I think, as was said in earlier evidence, not duplicating efforts between authorities or even between regions, doing things that need to be done at regional level once rather than six times over, and then where there are developments that need to be brokered between the Welsh Government and employers and employees in social partnership—a mechanism for doing that, not least with the Education Workforce Council at a national level. But shared work programmes. They are new, so they are going to take time to work through the system.

[293] **Bethan Jenkins:** Jyst cwestiwn **Bethan Jenkins:** Just a final question. olaf. Fel y dywedais yn gynharach, As I said earlier, what is your view beth yw eich barn chi ynglŷn â'r about the work that is, perhaps, gwaith sydd yn digwydd ar lefel going on on a local authority level, awdurdod lleol, fel gwaith gydag such as work with special needs and anghenion arbennig ac efallai different responsibilities? Do you cyfrifoldebau gwahanol? A ydych yn have the same kind of problem? Or cael yr un broblem? Wel, nid rather, not a problem but the same problem, ond yr un sialens â'r challenge that other consortia face? consortia eraill?

11:45

[294] **Mr Budd:** One of the elements that we have within the consortium is a series of professional networks. I've mentioned the HR network and the governor support network already. We have an inclusion network as well within the six authorities that looks at elements of issues that they have in common, and sees whether they can broker common solutions between them. GwE is part of that network, and is aware of their work programme—they link across in terms of their detailed work programmes. We are going through a period of major reform in terms of how support for individual learners is identified and brokered. It is one that is going to challenge, I think, many practitioners in schools, as well as those in the wider inclusion service in terms of how those reforms are shaped and delivered on the ground, particularly in a period when we're talking about diminishing resources. So, if I was to try and characterise where we reach within a region—we have that network, and they have a shared work programme, but if you were to ask me, 'Have they got a consistent approach in terms of delivery?', well, that's a way off; it's what they're building towards.

[295] **Bethan Jenkins:** Okay. Thanks.

[296] **David Rees:** And the last question from Suzy.

[297] **Suzy Davies:** Yes, and it is only one question. In response to questions to Keith Davies, Mr Budd, I think you said that co-operation and collaboration were in the DNA of GwE. I think that was your quote, more or less. That suggests to me that it's a philosophy you've held more or less since the beginning, so can you tell me why the Wales Audit Office says that the national model has not led to the development of sufficiently collaborative relationships between partners? In your own written evidence you say that there's a need to further hone the role of the GwE joint committee. I've got two conflicting pictures in my head, and I want to know which one's right.

[298] **Mr Budd:** Actually, I think there's a really good link into the previous question and answer. In some aspects of the national model, I think what we would typify things as being is emergent practice. So, there are some areas, like, for example, in terms of HR nationally and regionally, where the model is emergent, they have work programmes, detailed work programmes on

how they're going to align working practices and policies over the year and years ahead, but those have yet to come to fruition.

[299] **Suzy Davies:** Sorry, I don't mean to cut across, but why is it taking so long when it's in your DNA?

[300] **Mr Budd:** Well, as I was answering earlier on, in terms of early priorities, early priorities were around making sure that we have common systems in terms of identifying schools causing concern, effective strategies, and the capacity then follows through in terms of interventions. So, you could typify it as we started out with quite a narrow focus in terms of school improvement definition, and school improvement practice, and making sure that that was established on a rigorous and thorough approach across the region. What we are now doing is expanding that scope of what is contributing to school improvement and trying to get coherence in those areas as well.

[301] **Suzy Davies:** Okay. Thank you.

[302] **David Rees:** Thank you for that, and thank you for your evidence this morning. It's been very helpful. You'll receive a copy of the transcript to check for any factual inaccuracies; please let the clerking team know as soon as possible if you spot anything. Thank you for coming along this morning.

[303] **Mr H. Evans:** Diolch yn fawr.

[304] **Mr Budd:** Diolch yn fawr.

11:48

Papurau i'w Nodi Papers to Note

[305] **David Rees:** We move on to the next item on the agenda, whilst the witnesses leave. Papers to note—are Members happy to note the letter that NSPCC Cymru have given us on two initiatives, and the Universities Wales briefing note on their position in relation to the budget for 2016–17? Noted. Thank you.

11:49

**Cynnig o dan Reol Sefydlog 17.42(ix) i Benderfynu Gwahardd y
Cyhoedd o Weddill y Cyfarfod**
**Motion under Standing Order 17.42 (ix) to Resolve to Exclude the
Public from the Meeting for the Remainder of the Meeting**

Cynnig:

Motion:

*bod y pwyllgor yn penderfynu that the committee resolves to
gwahardd y cyhoedd o weddill y exclude the public from the
cyfarfod yn unol â Rheol Sefydlog remainder of the meeting in
17.42(ix).*

*accordance with Standing Order
17.42(ix).*

Cynigiwyd y cynnig.

Motion moved.

[306] **David Rees:** Are you content? We'll move into private session.

Derbyniwyd y cynnig.

Motion agreed.

Daeth rhan gyhoeddus y cyfarfod i ben am 11:49.

The public part of the meeting ended at 11:49.