



Northern Ireland  
Assembly  
Committee for Education  
MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS  
WEDNESDAY 13 NOVEMBER 2013  
SENATE CHAMBER

**Present:**

Mervyn Storey MLA (Chairperson)  
Danny Kinahan MLA (Deputy Chairperson)  
Michaela Boyle MLA  
Jonathan Craig MLA  
Jo-Anne Dobson MLA  
Chris Hazzard MLA  
Trevor Lunn MLA  
Stephen Moutray MLA  
Robin Newton MLA  
Seán Rogers MLA  
Pat Sheehan MLA

**In Attendance:**

Peter McCallion (Assembly Clerk)  
Karen Jardine (Senior Assistant Assembly Clerk)  
Sharon McGurk (Clerical Supervisor)  
Sharon Young (Clerical Officer)

**Apologies:**

None

*The meeting commenced in closed session at 9.45am.*

**1. Inquiry into the Education and Training Inspectorate and School Improvement Process - Oral evidence session**

The Committee considered evidence in closed session relating to its Inquiry into the Education and Training Inspectorate and the School Improvement Process.

*Jonathan Craig joined the meeting at 9.49am.*

*Pat Sheehan joined the meeting at 9.52am.*

*Danny Kinahan joined the meeting at 10.03am.*

*Jo-Anne Dobson left the meeting at 10.28am.*

*Jonathan Craig declared an interest as a member of a Board of Governors of a school.*

*Danny Kinahan declared an interest as a former member of a Board of Governors of a school.*

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to refrain from identifying the relevant witnesses in any future written or oral statement.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Department to seek clarification regarding the number of complaints (successful or otherwise) made against it in respect of school inspections to the NI Ombudsman and/or the Information Commissioner; and to ask for details of successful complaints.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Department to seek clarification regarding the number of judicial reviews (successful or otherwise) made against the Department in respect of school inspections; and to ask for details of successful judicial reviews or judicial reviews which were the subject of a settlement.

**Agreed:** The Committee also agreed to write to the Department to ask for comment on the following:

- the suggestion that the principles of 'Every School a Good School' were in one case applied by ETI to a school retrospectively;
- the suggestion that confidentiality is applied by ETI selectively in that it is afforded to complainants, but not certain staff members;
- the reported practice of destroying evidence relating to school inspections by ETI following the completion of inspection reports;
- how the assessment of school leadership by ETI is influenced by the non-compliance by staff with action plans and programmes recommended by ETI following an inspection report;
- how the assessment of school leadership by ETI is influenced by staff complaints linked to the resolution of staff performance management issues; and
- reports that where school leaders had complied with ETI requirements outlined in an inspection report, further requirements were put forward in subsequent reports.

**Agreed:** The Committee also agreed to write to the Department to determine how ETI benchmarks its inspection activities; assesses Inspectors; and provides training and development for Inspectors.

*Trevor Lunn left the meeting at 11.09am*

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to invite District Inspectors to an informal briefing event before the completion of its Inquiry.

*The meeting moved to open session at 11.10am.*

## **2. Apologies**

There were no apologies.

## **3. Chairperson's Business**

**3.1** The Chairperson thanked Members and staff for their attendance at the Committee's informal stakeholder event on the Common Funding Scheme on 6 November 2013.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to circulate a summary document to all those who had participated in the Common Funding Scheme (CFS) event and to thank them for their attendance.

The Chairperson referred Members to correspondence in tabled items which provided an analysis of Super Output Area information which might inform the development of alternatives to Free School Meal Entitlement as a poverty indicator in schools.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to ask Professor Gallagher to comment on this information when he briefs the Committee on 20 November 2013 and to invite the author of the Super Output Area analysis to brief the Committee at a later stage.

**Agreed:** The Committee noted that the Department is due to brief the Committee on the public responses to the CFS consultation on 4 December 2013. The Committee agreed to consider its response to the CFS consultation at that time.

The Chairperson referred Members to information in tabled items from the Belfast Education and Library Board which provides an analysis of the potential impact of the proposed revised Common Funding Scheme within that Board area.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Department to seek:

- clarification on the proposed changes to the Educational Attainment factor including the removal of the Warnock factor;
- confirmation that the removal of the Premises factor and increase in the AWPU would lead to a net loss from primary schools and a net gain for post-primary schools; and
- clarification on the impact of the use of 5 rather than 3 FSME bands on allocations to schools.

**3.2** The Chairperson referred Members to the recently published report by the Committee for Culture, Arts and Leisure on gaps in child safeguarding in the Culture, Arts and Leisure family of organisations.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Department to confirm that it has studied the report from the Committee for Culture, Arts and Leisure, and that it is working to implement any relevant recommendations, including the removal of

any gaps in child protection in organisations funded by DE or its Arm's-Length Bodies.

**3.3** The Committee welcomed guidance recently issued by the Minister to schools on the dangers of concussion which also signposted a concussion recognition tool.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed that Boards of Governors should be encouraged to make this important information available to parents.

#### **4. Draft Minutes of 6 November 2013**

**Agreed:** The minutes of the meeting held on 6 November 2013 were agreed by the Committee.

*Trevor Lunn returned to the meeting at 11.16am.*

#### **5. Matters Arising**

The Committee noted the following information with regard to its Inquiry into the Education and Training Inspectorate and the School Improvement Process:

- Written submissions from St. Colman's High School and Assumption Grammar School;
- Relevant extracts from previous reports of the Northern Ireland Ombudsman in respect of the destruction of records by ETI;
- Information from ETI on its complaints procedure, including the 'Standards for Complaint Handling' document; and
- Information from ETI on the impact of INTO/UTU industrial action on school inspections.

*Seán Rogers left the meeting at 11.17am.*

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to ask Assembly Research to produce a short paper comparing complaints procedures for school inspectors in other jurisdictions.

*Chris Hazzard left the meeting at 11.17am.*

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed that the correspondence would be published on its webpage.

#### **6. Inquiry into the Education and Training Inspectorate and School Improvement Process - Oral Evidence from the Association of Controlled Grammar Schools and the Association of School and College Leaders**

*The following witnesses joined the meeting at 11.18am:*

David Knox, Chairman, Association of Controlled Grammar Schools; Stephen Black, Member, Association of Controlled Grammar Schools; Frank Cassidy, Regional Officer, Association of School and College Leaders; and, Mr Scott Naismith, President, Association of School and College Leaders.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session. The evidence session was recorded by Hansard.

*Seán Rogers returned to the meeting at 11.19am.*

*Stephen Moutray left the meeting at 11.24am.*

*Chris Hazzard returned to the meeting at 11.27am.*

*Michaela Boyle joined the meeting at 11.27am.*

*The Chairperson, Mervyn Storey, left the meeting at 11.32am and the Deputy Chairperson, Danny Kinahan assumed the Chair.*

*The Chairperson, Mervyn Storey returned to the meeting at 12.02pm and assumed the Chair.*

*The witnesses left the meeting at 12.24pm.*

## **7. Inquiry into the Education and Training Inspectorate and School Improvement Process - Oral evidence from the National Association of Head Teachers**

*The following witnesses joined the meeting at 12.25pm:*

Fern Turner, Regional Officer, National Association of Head Teachers; Clare Majury, NI President, National Association of Head Teachers; and Jonathan Manning, Principal, Edenbrooke School.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session. The evidence session was recorded by Hansard.

*Jo-Anne Dobson returned to the meeting at 12.29pm.*

*Chris Hazzard left the meeting at 12.33pm.*

*Michaela Boyle left the meeting at 12.33pm.*

*Pat Sheehan left the meeting at 12.41pm.*

*Seán Rogers left the meeting at 1.05pm.*

*Jonathan Craig left the meeting at 1.24pm.*

*The witnesses left the meeting at 1.32pm.*

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Department to seek:

- further information on the weighting allocated in school inspections to end of Key Stage assessments as opposed to school pupil monitoring systems as compared to other inspection findings;
- commentary on suggestions of interference by ETI senior management with regard to the outcome of school inspections; and
- clarification as to the value placed by ETI on skills-based or vocational courses as opposed to academic courses when judging school performance.

## 8. Correspondence

**8.1** The Committee noted correspondence from the Department of Education advising that it is unable to specify the timescale for the development of proposals in respect of enhancing School Starting Age Flexibility.

**8.2** The Committee noted two separate responses from the Department of Education with regard to the evaluation of the Delivering Social Change: Nurture Unit Signature Project.

**8.3** The Committee considered correspondence from the Minister of Education in response to its queries regarding the proposed closure of Orangefield High School and the review of Development Proposal guidance, including an invitation to contribute to the review.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to consider legal advice on 27 November 2013 on the Development Proposal process and to consider the timescale for responding to the Minister at that time.

**8.4** The Committee noted a response from the Minister of Education to its queries regarding the timeline for the implementation of the agreed Ministerial Advisory Group recommendations on Shared Education and the next steps for other recommendations.

**8.5** The Committee noted correspondence from the Department of Education regarding a consultation on the Disability Action Plan 2013-15, and Five Year Review of Disability Action Plans.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to seek an oral briefing from the Department at the end of the consultation period so as to inform the Committee's review of education and health related matters.

**8.6** The Committee noted an invitation from the Committee for Employment and Learning to a Higher Education Showcase Event to be held in the Long Gallery on 19 November 2013 at 12.30pm.

**8.7** The Committee considered information copied to it by Seán Rogers MLA regarding complaints relating to the Southern Education and Library Board school maintenance contracts.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Southern Education and Library Board regarding the complaints in respect of maintenance contracts, and to ask if SELB has implemented recent learning from other public organisations in respect

of procuring and managing maintenance contracts, including reasonable response times and the management of costs etc..

## **9. Forward Work Programme**

**9.1** The Committee considered its Forward Work Programme.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to receive a briefing from Parents Outloud as part of the ETI Inquiry on 8 January 2014 and to also on that day consider, in private session, the issues raised by the Inquiry to date.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed that it was content with the Forward Work Programme as amended.

## **10. Any Other Business**

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to issue Christmas cards via post to its stakeholders.

## **11. Date, time and place of next meeting**

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 20 November 2013 at 9.30 am in the Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings.

*The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 1.35pm.*

**Mervyn Storey**  
**Chairperson, Committee for Education**  
**20 November 2013**