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**APPOINTMENTS IN CONFIDENCE**

PRIME MINISTER

**NATIONAL CURRICULUM: WELSH SUBJECT WORKING GROUP**

E(EP) agreed last July that we should set up subject working groups in Maths and Science to advise us on attainment targets and programmes of study. As you know, these groups have already produced their interim reports. I understand that Kenneth Baker intends to appoint English and Technology groups soon and I propose now to appoint the group on Welsh. I ... attach a copy of my proposed terms of reference for the group which are basically similar to those we have used for the Maths and Science groups but take account of developments since then and of the need to keep in touch with developments on English and the National Curriculum.

As Chairman I would propose, subject to your agreement, to appoint Professor Gwyn Thomas, Professor of Welsh at the University College of North Wales, Bangor. He is well respected academically, has been involved in the development of Welsh teaching in schools and is experienced in the field of examinations and assessment. He has a reputation for uncompromising standards in A level Welsh, as well as having the personal qualities and balanced approach needed for the Chairmanship.

/ I am copying this minute to Kenneth Baker and the other members of E(EP) and to Sir Robin Butler.

29 March 1988

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## NATIONAL CURRICULUM: WELSH SUBJECT WORKING GROUP

## TERMS OF REFERENCE

DRAFT OF 1 FEBRUARY 1988

## 1. PREAMBLE

1.1 The Government has introduced a Bill in Parliament to establish a National Curriculum for pupils of compulsory school age in England and Wales. The aim is to equip every pupil with the knowledge, skills and understanding to meet the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life. Within the National Curriculum, the Bill establishes foundation subjects - maths, English, science, Welsh, modern foreign languages, history, geography, technology, music, art and physical education. The degree of definition and the requirements to be set for each of these subjects will vary but maths, science, English and, in Welsh-speaking schools, Welsh, are core subjects and working groups are therefore being established first in these subjects. The Secretary of State for Wales will also be considering, in consultation with the Curriculum Council for Wales and others, what particular provision will be needed to accommodate the other distinctive needs of the curriculum in Wales.

1.2 For the core and other foundation subjects, the Government wishes to establish clear objectives - attainment targets - for the knowledge, skills, understanding and aptitudes which pupils of different abilities and maturities should be expected to have acquired at or near the key ages of around 7, and of 11, 14 and 16. To promote these objectives, the Government wishes to establish programmes of study for these subjects, describing the matters, skills and processes which need to be covered during each key stage. The level of detail of attainment targets and programmes of study will vary between subjects with some (such as music, art and PE) being more in the form of guidelines and those for the core subjects containing most detail. Taken together, the attainment targets and programmes of study will provide the basis for assessing pupils' performance - in relation both to expected attainment, and to the next steps needed for the pupils' development.

1.3 The Government wants attainment targets and the content of what is taught to reflect current best practice and achievement. Both the objectives

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(attainment targets) and means of achieving them (programmes of study) should leave scope for teachers to use their professional talents and skills to develop their own schemes of work, within<sup>a</sup> set framework which is known to all. It is the task of the subject working groups to advise on that framework. The assessment instruments used, including tests, will be developed separately in the light of the working group's recommendations and those of the Task Group on Assessment and Testing (TGAT; see 3b below). The Government have welcomed the broad framework proposed by TGAT for national assessment and testing. The group is invited to take account of this broad framework in its work on attainment targets and the related assessment arrangements at ages 7, 11, 14 and 16. TGAT have offered to advise Subject Working Groups and the group is asked to consult them.

## 2. THE TASK

2.1 Against this background, the Welsh working group is asked to submit an interim report to the Secretary of State for Wales by [30 Sept] 1988 outlining:-

- a. how their view of the contribution of Welsh (language and literature) to the overall school curriculum will inform their thinking about attainment targets and programmes of study;
- b. their provisional thinking about the knowledge, skills, understanding and aptitudes which pupils of different abilities and maturities should be expected to have attained and be able to demonstrate by the end of each key stage ie around the end of the academic year in which they reach the ages of 7, 11, 14, and 16. These should relate both to pupils who are taught Welsh as a first language and those who are taught Welsh as a second language;
- c. provisional thinking about the programmes of study through from 5 to 16 which would be consistent with the attainment targets provisionally identified. The Government envisages that programmes of study should cover the full range of linguistic circumstances and be applicable in all parts of Wales.

2.2 In the light of this thinking, the working group should also make recommendations about assessment of performance related to the attainment

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targets, and in particular what might appropriately be measured by externally set tests rather than by other techniques of assessment.

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2.3 By [31 January 1989], the working group is to submit a **final report** to the Secretary of State for Wales, setting out and justifying its final recommendations on attainment targets and the programme of study for Welsh (language and literature).

### 3. APPROACH

3.1 The working group will be given an indication of approximately how much time they should assume to be available within the curriculum for Welsh. This time will also be intended to cover the teaching of cross-curricular themes to which Welsh can contribute. The working group should consult informally with relevant interests and have regard to the work of the other subject working groups in particular those set up for English and Modern Foreign Languages. Additionally it should take account of:-

- a. the Secretary of State's policy as set out in 'The National Curriculum in Wales';
- b. the broad framework proposed by TGAT for assessment and testing;
- c. the desirability of a cross-subject approach to the development of primary attainment targets and assessment arrangements, particularly for 7 year olds, as recommended by TGAT. This will call for close collaboration with the other subject working groups.
- d. the need for attainment targets and programmes of study to reflect cross-curricular themes and subjects;
- e. best practice and the results of relevant research and curriculum developments;
- f. the national and subject criteria for GCSE, taken together with recent work to establish a more objective approach to measuring attainment through the GCSE, which should provide the starting point for recommendations relating to attainment at age 16 and programmes of study for ages 14-16;

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g. the need for continuity and progression throughout compulsory schooling;

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h. the contribution which Welsh can make to learning about other subjects and the contributions which these subjects can make to learning about Welsh;

i. the need to devise attainment targets and programmes of study appropriate for pupils of different abilities. The working group should give particular thought to the application of attainment targets in Welsh to lower attaining pupils; and

j. the need to establish attainment targets which take account of different language backgrounds and levels of provision in schools.