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FROM THE PRIVATE SECRETARY
TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE
FOR WALES

3 August 1983

Dear Tim,

*PA
4/8*

REPORT BY HMI ON THE EFFECTS OF LOCAL AUTHORITY EXPENDITURE
ON EDUCATION IN WALES

I am writing to let you know that my Secretary of State will be publishing tomorrow a paper by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Schools in Wales entitled "The Effects on the Education Service in Wales of Recent Local Authority Expenditure Policies: An Assessment by HM Inspectorate". The report complements a similar one published by the Secretary of State for Education and Science on 20 July about the position in England. I enclose 2 copies of the report and accompanying press notice for your information.

Publication will be on 4 August, following which the report will be made available generally, and copies will be sent to the news media, all Welsh MPs, local authorities, teacher organisations and other bodies in Wales.

Copies of this letter go to the Private Secretaries to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Secretaries of State for Education and Science, Employment, Northern Ireland and Scotland, and the Secretary to the Cabinet.

Yn eidd

Judy Roberts

J H ROBERTS

Tim Flesher Esq
Private Secretary
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IN CONFIDENCE

THE EFFECTS ON THE EDUCATION SERVICE IN WALES OF RECENT LOCAL AUTHORITY EXPENDITURE POLICIES : AN ASSESSMENT BY HM INSPECTORATE

Introduction

The sixth in a series of annual reports of HMI to the Expenditure Steering Group (Education) recording the effects of LEA expenditure policies on the education service in England is currently being made available. No strictly comparable procedure has been followed in Wales but in the course of their inspections of schools, colleges and other provision HMI have continually monitored the effects of expenditure policies. As a result HMI in Wales are able to offer a considered view on this topic.

This paper relies on two main sources of information:

- (i) returns made in January 1983 by the district inspectors for all the Welsh LEAs, based on information currently available to them and their teams;
- (ii) HMI's observations made in the course of inspection visits during, approximately, the calendar year 1982.

The following provisos are pertinent:

- (i) the coverage of schools and colleges is not statistically representative either nationally or for any one LEA;
- (ii) it is often difficult to disentangle the effects of expenditure policies from those of other factors, such as falling rolls in schools and increased demand for places in colleges of further education;
- (iii) the effects of expenditure policies vary in their impact from LEA to LEA, from school to school and from college to college because of pre-existing differences in the range and quality of provision;
- (iv) the assessments made by HMI relate not only to the observable effects of expenditure policies but also in some cases to the adequacy of the educational provision made and to the ways in which schools and LEAs have used, and are using, their resources.

SCHOOLS

Teaching Staff

The most recently available figures for the staff-pupil ratio within schools in Wales reveal that between January 1981 and January 1982 ratios worsened at the primary level in 5 LEAs (by 0.1, 0.3, 0.4, 0.6 and 0.8 respectively), remained the same in one LEA and improved in 2 LEAs (by 0.1 and 0.4 respectively). During the same period ratios at secondary level improved in 5 LEAs (by 0.1 in 3 cases and 0.2 in 2 cases), remained the same in one LEA and worsened in 2 LEAs (by 0.2 and 0.8 respectively). LEA estimates for 1982/83 as presented by CIPFA suggest that ratios have improved in 5 LEAs at both primary and secondary level within a range from 0.2 to 1.8, remained the same in one LEA, worsened in one LEA at primary level by 0.3 and worsened in another LEA at secondary level by 0.3. For Wales as a whole primary and secondary ratios show a slight worsening over the period between January 1981 and January 1982 but a general recovery thereafter. Although the reduction in the total number of teachers employed is in general aligned with the fall in pupil numbers, there is some evidence that at primary level (where the effects of falls in rolls are being experienced more immediately) the loss of teachers is proportionally greater than the fall in pupil numbers. In one LEA only 40% of the reduction in the number of primary teachers in the current school year can be attributed to falling rolls.

As in previous years it is clear that LEAs are applying ratios strictly and are reviewing them regularly. Such reviews sometimes work to the advantage of schools, as when more pupils return post-16 than had been anticipated and staffing is improved accordingly, at other times to the disadvantage of schools, as when, in similar circumstances, schools are obliged to absorb increases in rolls. In general staffing policies are operated tightly and allow little room for a flexible response to new or unexpected demands.

LEAs continue to reduce the number of teachers through early retirement, redeployment and natural wastage. The volume of such movements is growing smaller as LEAs approach the limits of what can be offered in terms of early retirement and of redeployment. The number of probationer teachers appointed to permanent posts continues to be small. The effects of short-term contracts on new entrants remain a source of concern though the efforts made in some LEAs to ensure reasonably adequate probationary experience are commendable.

Arrangements for supply cover in the event of staff absence, though distinctly worse in a minority of LEAs, have generally remained unchanged in 1982. The effects of these arrangements are now in some LEAs being felt by schools of all sizes, including the smaller schools which have hitherto been relatively well protected. In one LEA no supply cover is given for 10 days in primary schools where the head does not have full-time charge of a class and in another LEA supply cover is only provided after 4 days staff absence - even in the smallest schools. Such policies must be seen in the light of the facts that, as rolls continue to fall at primary level, more schools are coming within the range where heads are in full-time charge of a class and that the reduction in rolls is leading LEAs to consider an increasing number of amalgamations in urban areas and closures in rural areas. There are few signs that the range of curriculum provided in most schools has been adversely affected by staffing policies. However, the strict interpretation of such policies is beginning to pose problems for smaller schools in mixed language areas in the achievement of their bilingual aims.

In-service Training

The general picture in 1982 shows little change from the previous year. LEAs' own provision of INSET and their support for teachers who wish to attend courses provided by other agencies have remained at a relatively low level. Policies vary in detail from LEA to LEA and are related to decisions about educational priorities, about the strength of the advisory service and about supply cover. In general, however, LEAs have not developed their INSET provision. There are considerable variations in provision. Two LEAs have maintained or increased the number of teachers seconded to long courses whereas another LEA has eliminated support for these courses and reduced the number supported in part-time courses from 163 in 1979/80 to 29 in 1982. In 3 LEAs lack of financial support effectively discourages attendance at courses run outside the LEA's area. In some of those LEAs where there has been little change the generally unsatisfactory nature of the existing provision must be noted.

Induction of Probationers

There has been little change from last year. The number of probationers appointed remains low and many are employed on temporary contracts which reduce the effectiveness of the probationary period. There have been only minor reductions in the provision of courses for probationers.

Advisory Services

The slow erosion of advisory services continues. Some new appointments have occurred as LEAs attempt to rationalise or bring a better balance to their advisory body but the general trend is downwards and the new appointments do not match the number of advisers lost through natural wastage. The implementation of the Education Acts 1980 and 1981, the reorganisation or amalgamation of schools and the redeployment of staff, taken together with the continuing reduction of the administrative staff of LEAs, mean that advisers are obliged to sustain additional burdens. The general policy of most LEAs is not to fill vacant advisory posts; in some instances unfilled vacancies in key posts have significantly reduced the effectiveness of advisers' work.

Non-teaching Staff

Provision is generally either static or in decline. Some LEAs are reducing support through stricter staffing ratios, through non-replacement or temporary replacement of vacant posts, and through diversification of existing posts, for example, in combining clerical and ancillary posts. Adverse educational effects are caused in some LEAs by the withdrawal of ancillary support from classes of young children which though not designated as nursery classes contain children of nursery age (under fives) and in some secondary schools by increased demands on teachers resulting from reductions in general support staff.

There have been no changes in the pattern of employment of foreign language assistants.

Premises

Some of the long-term effects of reduced expenditure on maintenance are beginning to emerge, thus giving rise to further concern for the future. Although most urgent repairs (of potentially dangerous faults) are still carried out promptly, there is evidence of delay in response to all but the most serious crises and an increasingly piecemeal approach to maintenance as a whole. As a result schools are increasingly obliged to wait a considerable time before maintenance and repair jobs are fully completed. Repairs to leaking roofs or water systems which would formerly have commanded high priority are now sometimes delayed even when the work of pupils is directly affected. The period between routine redecorating of premises continues to lengthen in a majority of LEAs.

One LEA made a substantial additional sum of money available for furniture and equipment in 1982 but most LEAs have found it difficult to provide adequate replacements for broken or worn-out furniture.

Capitation, books, materials, equipment

On the basis of information supplied informally by LEAs, the capitation allowance in the financial year 1982/83 as compared with 1981/82 has been increased in 6 LEAs (in each case either in line with or in excess of the rate of inflation), has remained level in one LEA at both primary and secondary level and in another LEA at secondary level only, and has been reduced substantially in one LEA at primary level. The estimated capitation for the financial year 1982/83 when compared with the actual capitation for 1978/79 has more than matched the inflation of the intervening period in 2 LEAs at primary level and 5 LEAs at secondary level, has failed to match it in 5 LEAs at primary level and 3 LEAs at secondary level, and has kept pace with it in one LEA at primary level.

The considerable variations between LEAs in the range of items covered by capitation remain. Schools are generally obliged to pay out of capitation for a much wider range of items than was the case a few years ago. There are also significant differences between LEAs in the level of capitation. For example, a comprehensive school of approximately 1500 pupils in one LEA received an annual capitation of about £44,000, while a comparable school in another LEA received about £32,000. In general there were fewer unpredictable adjustments in capitation in 1982 and schools were thus able to plan the use of resources more systematically. When adjustments were made they were, in the case of 2 LEAs, in the form of additional sums for use by schools. In one of these LEAs it was discovered that in one area a significant proportion of capitation at primary level had remained unspent from the previous financial year.

Primary schools, and especially those affected by falling rolls, are coping reasonably well in terms of resources. Although provision is related to needs as perceived by schools, reductions in the real value of capitation have led many schools to give priority to maintaining stocks of necessary basic consumables. As a result there are signs that other resources, especially books, are beginning to deteriorate. Few schools have sufficient flexibility to enable them to replace large numbers of worn out books or to purchase new ones. The same is true of other, especially large and expensive, items of apparatus and equipment.

The effects of reductions in expenditure are more obvious at the secondary stage. There are examples of well resourced schools and poorly resourced schools and much depends upon the skill with which the complex needs of large institutions have been managed. In general, however, the trends noted in previous reports continue. A less generous distribution of sets of text or course books to classes of younger and especially less able pupils is increasingly apparent. The sharing of books is common. In many schools the replacement of outworn sets of books or the purchase of new cannot be contemplated. Schools are finding it extremely difficult to maintain (let alone replenish) library stocks and few books of general interest related to subjects can be acquired. In recent years shortages of sets of books, together with changes in teaching approaches, have encouraged some schools to use school-produced resource materials which, though often of commendable quality, lack the attractiveness and range of commercially-produced books and resources. The first signs are apparent in some schools that inability to replace or renew books is affecting the character and quality of the work done in some subjects. Three subject areas are particularly affected by expenditure constraints - art, craft and home economics.

Parental Contributions and other Sources of Funding

Parental assistance continues at the level indicated in last year's report (on average, about 10% of a school's capitation) but the range of uses to which such contributions are put is increasing. There is now virtually no area of schools' activities which has not benefited from parental help. Support for teachers' attendance at courses of in-service education and training is a notable new development.

Parents have bought or contributed substantially to the purchase of:

audio-visual equipment, library books, reading schemes, textbooks, course books, computers (and associated software), microscopes (£1,000), art/craft materials, mathematics equipment, physical education equipment, field trips, pianos, toys, curtains, carpets, cupboards, pinboards, shelving, duplicators, photocopiers.

Conclusion

The effects of changes in authorities' expenditure policies are dependent upon a number of factors:

- (i) the level of provision made by an authority in previous years; cuts in formerly generous provision will have fewer immediate effects than those in scant provision;
- (ii) the geographical, linguistic, economic and social background of the area; some authorities have a substantial incidence of social and educational disadvantage, or many small, linguistically mixed, rural schools, or a legacy of outmoded and inadequate buildings;
- (iii) the extent to which authorities have systematic plans for the organisation of provision and the improvement of standards; the existence of such a framework can ensure that economies are made in a coherent and reasonably logical manner;
- (iv) the skill with which individual schools have managed their resources in previous years;
- (v) the rate at which rolls are declining.

In general 1982 has not seen any dramatic changes in the level of LEAs' provision or in the schools' responses. Trends noted in previous reports have continued but at a slower rate. There have been no major adverse effects on the range of curriculum provided by most schools. However, some signs are emerging of those cumulative effects which a period of expenditure constraints might be expected to produce. Many schools are now giving priority to the maintenance of the curriculum and standards within it rather than to its development. The reductions in opportunities for INSET and the continued decline in advisory services are pertinent in this connection. The character and standards of work in some secondary schools are beginning to be adversely affected by shortage of appropriate resources. The balance of the work in some subject areas is also being directly and adversely affected by the need for economies. On the other hand, many schools continue to adjust skilfully to economic circumstances and in some cases they have been assisted in the period under review by additional support from LEAs.

Despite the indications of greater stability in expenditure policies there is no room for complacency. To some extent the schools have become accustomed to reductions in resources and in some cases have come to terms with less than adequate standards of provision. Although the fabric of the

system remains intact, there is little evidence to suggest that it is advantageously placed to respond fully to such new demands as the 1980 and 1981 Education Acts, new systems of examination at 16+ or the challenge of underachievement.

FURTHER AND HIGHER EDUCATION

Changes in the provision of courses

There continue to be difficulties for colleges in matching the provision of courses to changes in demand and needs. These are especially marked in non-advanced further education (NAFE), though certain categories of advanced further education (AFE) courses have not had the staffing and accommodation to enrol the increased number of applicants who have the basic qualifications to enter them.

In NAFE, the continued decline of enrolments into part-time vocational courses, especially those provided on a day-release basis from industry, has been more than offset by the general rise in demand for full-time courses as school leavers unable to find jobs have competed for places on colleges' vocational courses. At the same time most of the NAFE colleges have provided a new range of work skills courses for the Manpower Services Commission (MSC), alongside continuing provision of (a more limited range of) educational components of Youth Opportunities (YOPS) schemes. The fact that these courses are financed by MSC has accounted in most LEAs for the increases in staffing and resourcing which have allowed the colleges to put on more of them for more students and for longer periods than was possible last year.

The number of conventional link courses with schools has declined further in a number of LEAs, but this has been offset in 3 authorities by expansion of linked 16+ vocational courses jointly provided by schools and colleges, for the Business Education Council (BEC) General Certificate or Diploma.

The provision of full-time AFE courses has continued to increase, and under pressure of increasing demand most vocational diploma and degree courses, and some non-vocational courses, have enrolled first year intakes above last year's increased numbers. The number of advanced part-time courses has also increased in spite of reduced industrial training budgets and continuing low levels of industrial and commercial recruitment of A-level

and post-A-level entrants, but such courses still tend to be provided in joint teaching groups including equivalent full-time course students. Elsewhere, severe problems of course provision have emerged in part-time post-experience and post-qualification courses, notably in fields such as industrial management, where the majority of conventional courses in Wales are now at risk because of a considerable decline in enrolments.

Among the AFE courses which now appear to be recruiting close to or above their maximum desirable intake numbers are those in the industrially attractive subjects of technology, electronics and business/commercial development. Such provision depends on effective resources of modern technological (high technology) equipment, and for this purpose the Welsh Office have approved increased capital expenditure in one LEA.

Changes in Staffing and Staff Development

(a) Teaching Staff

There has been a small net expansion of both full-time and part-time staffing over AFE and NAFE taken together in Wales in the past year. Further reductions in teacher training faculties have been offset by increases in other AFE sectors, notably in computing, business studies and technology departments. While in NAFE there have been no significant increases in staffing of conventional FE provision, expansion of MSC-funded work skills courses has been achieved by sizeable increases in full-time temporary and part-time appointments, and a modest increase in full-time established posts (mainly to provide professional supervision and leadership in course/curriculum development).

Part-time staffing has been extensively used to give flexibility of provision and development in meeting the rapidly increasing demands of work skills programmes organised for the MSC, and in response to the continuing uncertainty about the form and extent of MSC-commissioned programmes in the coming session. The increase in the proportion of part-time and temporary full-time staffing, particularly in the NAFE colleges, has led to an increase in the load of administrative and supervisory/counselling work carried by full-time established teachers. In some LEAs and colleges the staff development demands of this new MSC work have tended to swamp the needs of "conventional" FE courses, and of certain courses (BEC and TEC) in particular.

Budgets for in-service training and staff development in NAFE have been supported by the MSC "Robertson shilling" arrangements, designed to be used for staff teaching on the YOPS and the new work skills courses. This has helped most LEAs and colleges to avoid further constraints on in-service provision, but in 2 or 3 LEAs budgets are now so low that for the great majority of staff teaching on conventional courses there is very little chance of attending short courses outside the county or in some cases outside the college, even where new AFE or NAFE course developments would seem to require it. Those staff who, particularly in NAFE, require updating in new technologies, such as computing and their applications, are not often able to acquire this unless, as a number do, they attend courses at their own expense and in their own time.

(b) Non-teaching Staff

Most LEAs have not made further reductions of non-teaching staff in NAFE colleges in addition to those made last year. A number of technician and clerical posts are not being filled for considerable periods following vacancies - in one authority some have remained un-filled for over a year. This same authority has reduced overall cleaning staff time at its FE colleges this session by 30%. A number of colleges in 2 authorities have continuing difficulties in maintaining an effective library service; some of these have no qualified library staff and are using temporary clerical assistants to keep their libraries open. There remains widespread difficulty in maintaining the staffing of support services in line with the general expansion of enrolments in NAFE courses.

The AFE institutions have also borne their share of cuts in non-teaching budgets, but since most started from better resourced levels, the cuts have not had such severe effects on services in support of teaching and learning. Nevertheless, there have been shortages of qualified ancillary and technician staff which have had noticeable effects on maintenance of equipment and on teaching.

Support services to students have been maintained, at rather low levels, in most LEAs, with only two assessed by HMI as providing an appropriate level of support in the careers and counselling areas.

Changes in expenditure patterns

(a) Current expenditure - materials and equipment

Budgets for consumables and small equipment have been generally maintained at the somewhat reduced levels of last year. In a small number of instances

(some catering courses, for example), colleges have exhausted their budgets before courses have come to their end, and have been forced to curtail some practical work. Increases in costs of materials early in the year appeared likely to cause problems because budgets had not been increased in line with inflation, but this situation was reversed for many NAFE colleges later in the year, and a number of instances occurred in which colleges were unexpectedly asked to use substantial LEA reserves quickly. While this gave opportunities for the purchase of much needed replacements or new types of equipment (word processors, for example), it has resulted in a certain number of hasty, ill-judged purchasing decisions based on availability rather than the careful assessment of technical characteristics. In many other cases the channelling of MSC income into college budgets has allowed for a degree of desirable replacement or extension of equipment.

The general level of equipment in many NAFE colleges still represents an inadequate response to or reflection of changes in business and industry. There remain a considerable number of colleges whose office studies/commerce equipment is failing to keep pace with the growing number of small and large firms who have installed microcomputer-based systems and word processors. Similar effects have been noticed in relation to other electronic equipment and in telecommunications, industry and business.

(a) Capital expenditure on large equipment and accommodation

Most LEAs still make no provision in their AFE and NAFE college estimates for amortization of capital equipment; as a result capital budgets which have been continuously reduced are not enough to provide for desirable replacement of obsolescent equipment, for purchase of electronic and automatic control techniques, or for updating of expensive technologies such as CAD/CAM. Many authorities have introduced selective increases in capital equipment, such as electronic control instrumentation and computer/micro systems, against a general background of continuing reductions. One authority has made special capital allowances to bring its main AFE college up to an adequate level and has also made specific allowances for the extension of equipment needed for the development of BEC link courses for 16+ students established jointly by its colleges and its secondary schools. Other authorities have made additional specific allowances for major new technology/electronics course development in their AFE institutions.

There have been continuing developments in college teaching accommodation in a number of institutions both AFE and NAFE, some programmed through the LEAs own major building programmes, some as a result of channelling of building grants by the MSC. There have also been sizeable developments in two tertiary schemes. However, there remain deficiencies in further education capacity and in the planning of new capacity in certain parts of the country. A considerable number of NAFE colleges have taken on old school and other buildings as MSC-commissioned course annexes.

Probably one of the most serious effects of reductions in LEA expenditure has been the physical deterioration of the general condition and in some cases of the fabric itself of college buildings and teaching accommodation. Examples of deterioration (even of structural defects going unrepaired) have been reported from most of the Welsh LEAs and it is now inevitable that many LEAs will face large repair and maintenance bills as a direct outcome of some years of cumulative neglect.

Changes in grants to students

Most LEAs have stabilised their discretionary grants to students at the low levels resulting from the policies of previous years. There have been continued limitations on the scope and applicability of grants. Although two LEAs can be regarded as still providing good support, most LEAs' total grants bills have been reduced from last year's levels, even in money terms, and the real value of both total grant budgets and the level of grants to individuals has been reduced further.

Changes in the match of courses provided to needs and demand

Most unmet demand in NAFE appears to be located in areas of particularly high school-leaver unemployment. Lack of availability of places continues to be reported in business studies, clerical and secretarial courses, in food and catering; in hairdressing and beauty culture courses; and in caring and nursing studies. These courses are largely seen as vocationally suited to girls, but there are also shortages of places in courses which attract more boys, in particular computing and technology subjects, including electronics.

The MSC-commissioned work-skills courses which have been developed in every LEA have considerably increased the overall provision of vocational programmes, generally at lower ability levels, and the success of the NAFE colleges in setting up these courses, involving a substantial element of work placement experience in collaboration with employers, has been one of the most encouraging and stimulating developments of FE in Wales. These courses, which could not have been mounted on the scale actually achieved without MSC support, provided places for nearly 2200 young people in the 16-19 age range. Many colleges have also continued to provide the educational components of Youth Opportunities and other MSC-commissioned programmes.

In AFE unmet demand has continued to increase. Many degree and diploma courses have experienced sharp increases in the number of applicants, particularly in business studies, computing and virtually all the engineering and technological subjects. A small number of new courses have been established and places on existing ones expanded. The intakes, however, though larger, have tended to be better qualified on entry.

The availability and quality of industrial and business "sandwich" training places, and of supervision of students on them, have continued to deteriorate this session, and a number of sandwich diploma courses have been converted to full-time, temporarily, dropping the sandwich elements. In other cases, colleges have had to develop alternative approaches to industrial/work experience, for example, by setting up simulated workshop experience themselves, in their own or in other colleges' workshops. Many AFE colleges now have little staff capacity available to send out to search for and generate more training placements, or to improve the capacity of existing ones.

Over the AFE system as a whole, the general slimming down of teacher training provision and courses with weak enrolments which led to considerable spare or underused capacity is now almost complete. Student/staff ratios in most AFE college faculties are now higher than they were three to five years ago. This reflects not only a generally more economically effective utilization of HE staff, but a more even level of deployment; but it conceals some examples of severe pressure on staff resources in certain degree and diploma programmes.

YOUTH AND ADULT

The level of funding for youth and adult education, following severe cuts in 1979-81, has in general remained in real terms at the level of last year. Some authorities, are seeking to increase provision, particularly for the young unemployed, and with improved organisation and management 2 have been able to finance modest growth. Some significant developments have been funded by central government under Urban Aid and specific grant and other, often independent, developments by the MSC. There is, however, scope for a wiser investment of public funds in a programme that integrates provision locally into a coherent programme.

Enrolment fees have increased generally, sometimes considerably more than the rate of inflation. There is now wide variation in charges, with, for example, one authority charging £9 for 12 hours tuition and another £8 for 24 hours tuition. Another authority has reduced the length of sessions to 1½ hours and its term from 10 to 8 weeks. The implications of varying practices go beyond costs; less time and less frequent meetings erode continuity and are particularly disadvantageous for practical studies and activities. Enrolments have continued at last year's level but with increased emphasis on day as opposed to evening classes and an increase in the proportion of senior citizens and unemployed.

Staffing levels are largely unchanged; only in one authority has there been a reduction, with the loss of 5 full-time posts and further reduction in part-time staff. In 1982 this authority employed part-time staff for 8000 hours, compared with 20,400 hours in 1979-80, while enrolments during this same period increased by 15%. Two authorities however, have been able, through reorganisation, to increase staffing in the youth sector and in one area to open 2 new clubs and extend opening hours, often to 3, 4 and sometimes 5 nights a week. In almost all authorities in-service training of staff remains neglected, particularly in meeting the needs of the unemployed. The initiative and resourcefulness of one authority has shown that more can be done for staff development with current resources.

Neglect of maintenance and repair generally give cause for concern. Youth clubs, subjected as they often are to considerable wear and tear, are in many areas approaching the stage when closure is imminent. As the physical condition of school and college premises deteriorates, so does the environment for a considerable proportion of adult education - and this

at a time when the client is paying much higher fees. Authorities give low priority in their budgets to the needs of youth and adult education. In one county where no funds are allocated for maintenance, commendable self help efforts have become widespread and secured marked improvements. In another authority similar initiatives have been discouraged and virtually stopped by trade union opposition.

EMBARGO: This Report is issued in advance of the strict understanding that no approach is made to any organisation or person about its contents before the time of publication

NOT FOR PUBLICATION BEFORE
THURSDAY, AUGUST 4, 1983

August 2, 1983

HMI REPORT ON EDUCATION EXPENDITURE IN WALES

A report * submitted by Her Majesty's Inspectorate to the Secretary of State for Wales, on the effects of local authority expenditure policies on education in Wales, was published today. A similar report ** to Sir Keith Joseph was published in England on July 20.

The Welsh paper, relating to schools and maintained colleges of further and higher education in Wales and to the youth service and adult education, was compiled mainly from information obtained during 1982, and indicates that there had been no major adverse effects on the range of curriculum in general in schools, and that there had been some degree of improvement in provision in the HFE field.

*The Effects on the Education Service in Wales of Recent Local Authority Expenditure Policies: An Assessment by HM Inspectorate, available free from the Education Department, Welsh Office, Cathays Park, Cardiff CF1 3NQ. Telephone 0222 823360.

** Report by Her Majesty's Inspectorate on the Effects of Local Authority Expenditure Policies on the Education Service in England 1982.

However, the report warns that there is no room for complacency and although the fabric of the system remains intact, the combined effects of expenditure restraints and the need to manage falling rolls has left local education authorities and schools less well-placed to respond constructively to the many calls for educational improvement and change.

Commenting on the report the Secretary of State for Wales, the Rt Hon Nicholas Edwards MP said: "I have noted carefully the comments and concerns expressed in the report, which reflects the ways in which the different education authorities in Wales are managing the changes and demand pattern which have arisen in recent years against a background of restraint in public expenditure. The circumstances of the authorities differ - some have a greater incidence of social and educational disadvantages than others, some have inherited a legacy of unsatisfactory buildings, and the level of provision in previous years varies with authority. But the service remains intact in Wales, and I hope that the education authorities will follow the example of those where, as the report says, many schools continue to adjust skilfully to economic circumstances."
