

# Meeting the Challenges –the way forward

Brian Lightman  
General Secretary

Or to put it another way.....

**DONE TO  
OR  
DOING WITH**

# A view from London





**Chaos Theory** Vicky Brago-Mitchell

A selection (!) of the changes underway in England

- National curriculum
- Floor standards
- GCSE
- AL
- HE entry
- ITT
- CPD
- Regulation of profession
- School funding
- Academisation
- Free Schools
- Careers Education
- PSHE
- Diplomas gone
- Quangos
- LEAs



‘By the end of this parliament a failing ,  
underperforming school will be deemed one  
where less than 50% of pupils are getting  
five good GCSEs.’

**'At last! Teacher is back in charge:  
Tories pledge to end classroom  
chaos and the obsession with  
pupils' rights'** Daily Mail 01.09.11



## SOLDIERS TO RUN FREE SCHOOL

A MILITARY-style school for deprived children staffed entirely by ex-servicemen will open in response to the riots, it was revealed yesterday.

Senior Forces personnel, including the captain of an elite Afghan counter-insurgency unit and former Chief of Defence Staff Lord Guthrie, are behind the free school called the Phoenix.

Housed in ex-Territorial Army barracks in Oldham, it will have a zero-tolerance approach to bad behaviour.

And it will 'rip-up' the national curriculum and ditch 'liberal' teacher-training techniques. Pupils starting aged 11 will be taught only literacy and numeracy until they have reached minimum standards.

The school, which is still at the planning stage and would not open until next year, is the idea of an Army captain, whom the Ministry of Defence has requested remains anonymous for security reasons.

Setting out his vision, he said: 'The



performance of our Armed Forces in Afghanistan and elsewhere stands in stark contrast to the mobs that have recently been roaming our streets.'

**DONE TO**

## Messages about our education service

- Behaviour is extremely poor and needs to be sorted out by government, army officers or male teachers.
- Truancy is rife.
- The curriculum is not fit for purpose.
- E Bacc subjects are more important.
- Exams have been dumbed down.
- The quality of teachers being recruited into the profession is not good enough
- Teacher training is based on 'outdated theory' rather than best practice.
- Almost every other country has a better education system than ours.

# OR DOING WITH

- Behaviour in most schools is very good.
- We have more evidence of improving attendance than ever before.
- Standards have risen steadily over the last decade or so.
- Attainment is higher than it has ever been.
- There is a vast amount of innovative practice.
- We have the best generation of entrants to teaching
- People all over the world want to learn from the good practice in Britain.

## Some of the top unintended consequences of the done to approach

- The focus on the C/D borderline
- Teaching = examination preparation
- Assessment derailed
- Abuse of data
- The football manager situation
- Disincentives to have FSM/ SEN pupils on roll
- Massive numbers of surplus places
- Fragmentation of the system.
- Role of school in locality undermined.

## Some of the most unpalatable consequences

- Curriculum planning starting with accountability and qualifications.
- Return to target culture with floor 'standard' rising from 35% to 50% for all schools.
- Forced academisation
- Surplus places - atrophy of schools in a free market
- Disincentives for potential school leaders
- Creation of haves and have nots.
- Punitive inspection culture with online questionnaires and unannounced inspections.



## ASCL Cymru conference 2011

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## BUT

- England continues to race ahead of Wales against key indicators.
- Many of the interventions there have had a major impact on attainment
- England is leading the way in the effective use and abuse of data.
- Very high expectations of classroom practice in many schools.
- Ofsted bar has been raised to a high level.
- School and college leaders have risen to the challenge

## Some interventions

- Close tracking of pupil progress by schools leading to specific, targeted interventions.
- One-to-one tuition in English and literacy compensating for low levels of literacy or the needs of learners for whom English is an additional language.
- Deployment of learning assistants to give additional support and attention to individuals within mainstream classes providing them with enhanced access to the curriculum.
- Mentoring programmes.
- Providing access out-of-school hours to facilities which provide pupils with a place to study and access to ICT.
- After-school revision programmes
- Schemes such as parenting programmes and support groups which help parents to support their children in their education.
- Early exam entry.
- Limited curriculum until English (literacy) and Maths (numeracy) standards reach specific standard.

## **Confident schools**

- **Band 1 or 2**
- **Oversubscribed**
- **Well to do catchment**
- **Very good, recent Estyn report**
- **Parents supportive**
- **Stable staffing**
- **Unions low profile.**

## **Constrained schools**

- **Band 4 or 5**
- **Surplus places**
- **Challenging catchment**
- **Estyn could come any time**
- **Challenging parents**
- **Staffing issues**
- **Union issues**

## Confident schools

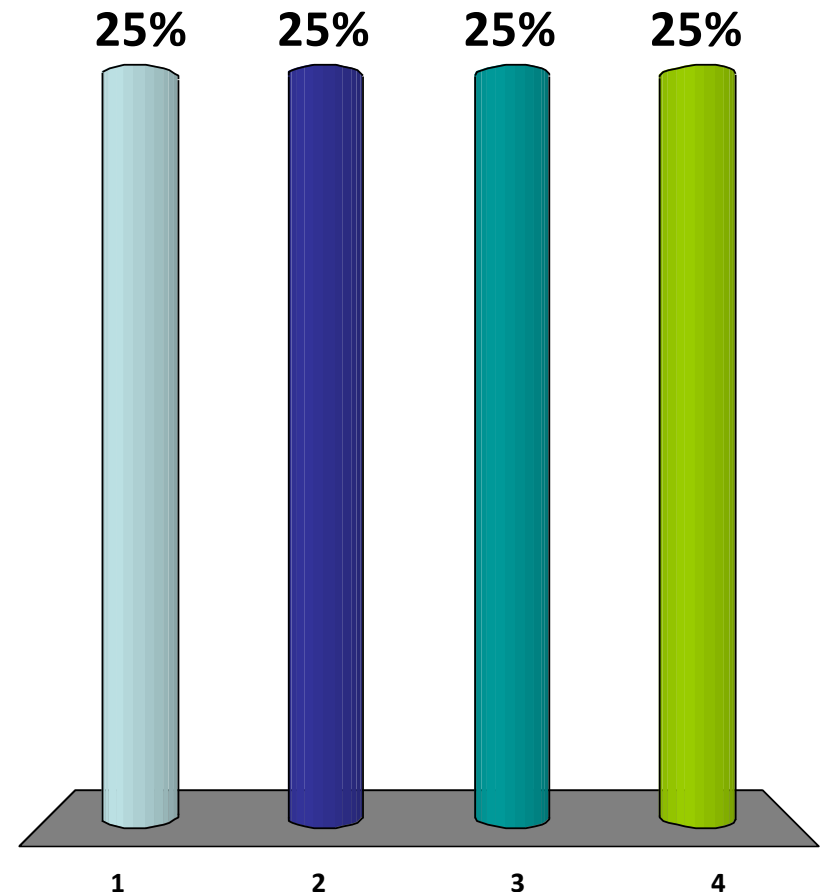
- Can choose to ignore government policy.
- Curriculum designed according to long term vision of leadership.
- Able to relax about accountability measures
- Unlikely to be at risk if inspected.
- Teaching can be innovative and creative.

## Constrained schools

- Reactive to government policy.
- Curriculum dominated by external demands rather than the school's vision..
- Can never relax about accountability measures.
- Focused on Estyn framework
- Teaching to the test – constrained by C/D borderline

## Would you consider your school to be:

1. A confident school
2. A constrained school
3. Unsure
4. I don't agree that these definitions are valid



So are we heading towards a world of .....

**DOING WITH  
OR  
DONE TO SCHOOLS?**

## Confident education services:

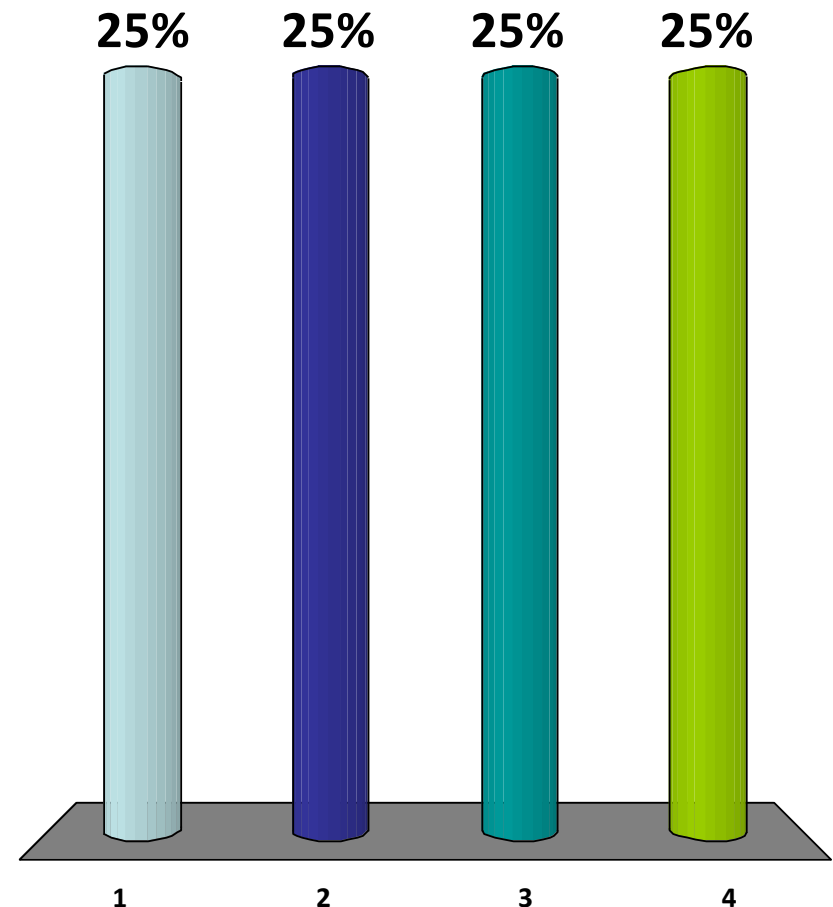
- Believe in themselves
- Are outward facing and willing to learn.
- Celebrate and be proud of their successes.
- Are highly ambitious for the young people in our care.
- Trust the professionals in their schools and colleges.
- Have a slimmed down infrastructure with maximum funding to front line.
- Are self improving systems with school leaders in the driving seat.

## Constrained education services

- Constantly look over their shoulders
- Are inward looking and defensive.
- Are built on a culture of denigration.
- Accept second best for the young people in their care.
- Micromanage professionals in schools and colleges.
- Add increasing layers of bureaucracy with the consortia
- Are driven by people without a credible track record in school improvement.

## Would you consider Wales to have:

1. A confident education service
2. A constrained education service
3. Unsure
4. I don't agree that these definitions are valid



Do you have a .....

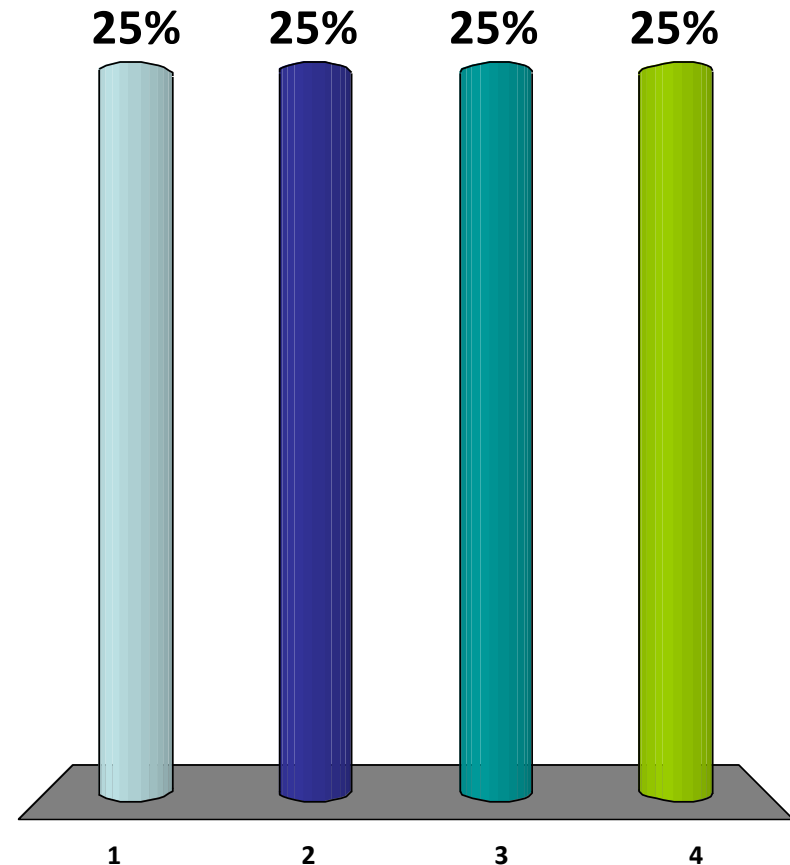
**DOING WITH LEA**

**OR**

**DONE TO LEA?**

## How confident are you in the capacity of your LEA/consortium to help you to raise standards?

1. Very confident
2. Confident
3. Doubtful
4. Very doubtful indeed



## **The greatest challenges for school leaders in England**

- Staff morale , the pensions dispute, succession planning
- Pay freeze / pay & conditions issues.
- Budgets – are SLTs prepared for what is coming?
- Post riot England
- Social mobility – Access to HE ,information advice and guidance
- Accountability / Floor standards
- A narrow, backward looking curriculum
- Structural issues
- Government messaging

## **The greatest challenges for school leaders in Wales**

- Staff morale , the pensions dispute, succession planning.
- Pay freeze / pay & conditions issues.
- The even greater challenge of budgets in the context of the national scandal of the £1300 gap and 85% target for delegation.
- Banding –the tyranny of the single grade.
- Accessing high quality support for school improvement, leadership development and services to schools.
- Developing expertise and technical support in the effective use of data
- **Seizing control of our professional ground.**

## Key issues for Wales

- Unintended consequences of banding. Return to league tables?
- The emerging choice agenda.
- Effective use of data
- School to school support – who drives it? Getting collaboration embedded.
- Collaborative models of CPD without teaching schools
- Classroom priorities – basic skills in literacy and numeracy
- Being confident enough to retain what we value in Welsh curriculum.
- Seizing the agenda

Or to put it another way.....

**It is our agenda**

## ‘Doing with’ challenges for school leaders – Curriculum Planning

- Defining success - The E Bacc debate.
- ‘Vocational’ courses – the Wolf debate.
- Employability skills.
- A curriculum which develops the kind of citizens a healthy society needs.
- Strengthening our local and national community.
- A core set of values
- Shared commitment between government and profession to costing (realistically) and planning a curriculum according to our vision of a learning country.
- Putting qualifications and outcomes come at the end, not the beginning of this process.

## 'Doing with' challenges for school leaders – Teaching and Learning

- Lesson observation by middle, senior leaders and peer to peer including learning walks absolutely indispensable and should be at heart of planned CPD. No excuses.
- Clear criteria about expectations in every classroom.
- Continue to incorporate skills into all teaching rather than talking about literacy and numeracy initiatives etc.
- Sharing what works – still too few networks in Wales and too little sharing across Offa's Dyke and Hadrian's Wall.
- Channelling the expertise that is in our schools.

## ‘Doing with’ challenges for school leaders - Leadership

- Raising expectations and esp. GCSE attainment.
- Rising to challenge of English floor standard.
- Raising bar of acceptable classroom performance – implications for middle and senior leaders and LEA HR departments.
- Lead, plan and develop cost effective, collaborative models of CPD including leadership development without waiting for external bodies to set them up.
- Reversing funding trend so that funds reach schools.
- Creating a skilled set of system leaders.

## 'Doing with' challenges for school leaders – Economy / Society

- Refusing to tolerate variability of opportunities across Wales.
- Raising ambition.
- Allowing long term vision to prevail.
- Values / culture.
- Providing for Inclusion – alternative provision
- Addressing NEET problem
- Retaining impartial information , advice and guidance.
- Retaining access to HE and maintaining quality of HE in Wales in context of funding.
- Ensuring access to apprenticeships

## Leading more than one school

- Need for a legal/regulatory framework
- Clarity of roles/ models
- Inspection
- Strategic versus operational roles
- Different skill set?
- Relationship with Staff and stakeholders inc. Governors
- Appropriate governance models
- Reputational risks
- Academy chains
- ASCL seminar and future actions

## The key questions:

- How do we ensure that all secondary schools in Wales can be confident ones?
- How can we ensure that our education service is a confident one?
- How are we going to avoid those unintended consequences?
- How can we rise to the challenge of 'doing with'?

## The cage is open .....

