

2025.09.08

3.23 Deputy L.K.F. Stephenson of St. Mary, St. Ouen and St. Peter of the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning regarding the demand for States secondary school places (OQ.191/2025):

Question

Will the Minister explain what modelling is undertaken to predict the demand for States secondary school places; and will he also advise at which point in the process any potential challenges in demand are identified and what procedures are in place to address such challenges?

Answer

The department has been routinely forecasting pupil numbers for many years to support strategic planning across the education system. Our current model draws on a range of robust data sources, including:

- Birth numbers
- Termly pupil census data
- Residential addresses of pupils
- Migration patterns within the pupil population

This modelling includes estimating how pupils are likely to be distributed across different education sectors—such as Government of Jersey fee-paying, non-fee-paying, and private schools. We use these data inputs to project future cohort sizes and forecast year group demand at individual schools over a twenty-year period.

Recognising that all projections carry a degree of uncertainty, and that population dynamics can change, we apply a prudent planning assumption by incorporating an additional 5–10% capacity within the system to ensure resilience and flexibility in meeting future demand. For example, the forecasts for Year 7 taken during Year 5 enable schools and the department to plan forms of entry and any staffing changes that may be required.

So, there are continual points at which challenges around demand are identified. Including projections for the next 20 years. For the deputy, we have briefed the scrutiny panel and all head teachers on the future demographic trends. There is no simple summary of the future projections.

The Bailiff:

We come now to questions without notice. The first Minister is the Minister for Health and Social Services.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

Sir, before we start, could I just ask a question of the Chair?

The Bailiff:

Yes, of course.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

The intention is that this questions without notice will take us to 5.30 p.m., is it our intention to continue with the 2 statements after that?

The Bailiff:

It is entirely a matter for the Assembly of course. I have given permission for a personal statement to be made by Deputy Ozouf as the next item of business after questions. Then there is a statement from you, as Minister, which will of course attach to it the possibility of some questions to follow on from

that. If we do get through that today, then that will enable the Assembly to have a flying start tomorrow with Public Business but that is a matter for the Assembly ultimately. We will probably need to decide that when we finish the question periods.