



Children, Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel

Quarterly Hearing

Witness: The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning

Wednesday, 19th November 2025

Panel:

Deputy C.D. Curtis of St. Helier Central (Chair)

Connétable M. Labey of Grouville (Vice-Chair)

Deputy H.M. Miles of St. Brelade

Witnesses:

Deputy R.J. Ward of St. Helier Central, The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning

Mr. K. Posner, Interim Chief Officer, C.Y.P.E.S.

Mr. J. Williams, Programme Director, C.Y.P.E.S.

Ms. R. Baxter, Head of School Improvement and Advisory Service

Mr. M. Newberry, Head of School Review and Inspection

Ms. T. Jackson, Policy Officer

[10:00]

Deputy C.D. Curtis of St. Helier Central (Chair):

Welcome to this quarterly hearing of the Children, Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel. Today is 19th November. I would like to draw everyone's attention to the following. This hearing will be filmed and streamed live. The recording and transcript will be published afterwards on the States Assembly website. All electronic devices, including mobile phones, should be switched to silent. I am Deputy Catherine Curtis, chair of the panel.

Connétable M. Labey of Grouville (Vice-Chair):

I am Connétable Mark Labey from the Parish of Grouville. I am vice-chair.

Deputy H.M. Miles of St. Brelade:

I am Helen Miles, Deputy of St. Brelade. I am a member of the panel.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Deputy Rob Ward, Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning.

Interim Chief Officer, C.Y.P.E.S.:

Keith Posner, Interim Chief Officer in C.Y.P.E.S. (Children, Young People, Education and Skills).

Head of School Improvement and Advisory Service:

Rachel Baxter, Head of School Improvement and Advisory Service.

Head of School Review and Inspection:

Matthew Newberry, Head of School Review and Inspection.

Programme Director, C.Y.P.E.S.:

Jonathan Williams, Programme Director for C.Y.P.E.S.

Policy Officer:

Tania Jackson, Policy Officer.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Okay, thank you. everyone. We have got 1½ hours for this hearing so I will start with some questions about the Island S.E.N.D. (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) review. Minister, could you start by explaining what steps you are taking to address the review's finding that leadership, oversight and accountability arrangements for inclusive education are currently not sufficiently effective?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

First of all, I welcome the S.E.N.D. review. We commissioned it, and we commissioned it for transparency. That is why I gave the statement to the Assembly to question. Although some of the findings were challenging, we have to do that. We have made changes to inclusion and leadership, including a secondment of experienced headteachers into the department to strengthen the collaboration between schools and the central team. That is one of the most important points. That

perceived and probably real, in some areas more than others, disconnect between central and team and what is going on in the schools I think is now being repaired, and that is a really important part of the response to the S.E.N.D. review. They are wide-ranging, the recommendations, but the focus on repairing relationships and that building of trust I think is a really important thing. Both trust for schools, trust centrally and, most importantly, trust for parents and children themselves is the way forward.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

With that focus on trust and accountability, you have mentioned the secondment of the headteachers; are there any other main points?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Obviously the review is quite recent so we are going to publish an immediate priorities plan by Christmas this year. I think the draft is nearing completion.

Interim Chief Officer, C.Y.P.E.S.:

That is correct, yes.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

So that is the next step, I think, in that plan to move forward there, plus the things that we are already doing there. Anyone want to add anything to that? I think those are the 2 main areas. That is where the main response is going to be.

Interim Chief Officer, C.Y.P.E.S.:

We certainly will be outlining the immediate priorities, as the Minister has said. Central to that will be the governance structure and the external monitoring of the programme going forward, which are absolutely key to the success of this. That first plan, which we will publish before Christmas, we will start outlining that, and that then leads into a medium-term plan over the next 3 years, and a longer-term plan which stretches into the future, because in terms of the reform work that we need to do in this space, it will take a number of years. But we also want to be able to progress as quickly as we can, make sure that we have the right structures that we are delivering and make sure that we have the external review on that to check what we are doing.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

One of the things as well, we need to get a better map - that is probably a good word actually - of the increasing need and where it is in our schools. I do believe we have got better data management to do that. We launched an inclusion charter, which I think stuttered a little because we have had the S.E.N.D. review, we need to begin at that and that needs to be reinvigorated and make it more

real and more school focused. But even more than that, actual outcomes-wise so they can see what is actually happening. I think the use of information that we have in our young people to map what is needed into the future helps us plan for the things that we see in the future and, as numbers change in our schools, I think that is more possible.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Thank you for that. Minister, could you explain why the recommendations from the 2021 N.A.S.E.N. (National Association for Special Educational Needs) review have not yet been fully implemented?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

They have not been fully implemented, and that is a really key thing. There have been things from the N.A.S.E.N. review that have been put into place. There are more additional resource provisions, A.R.P.s, across schools. There is enhanced safeguarding training, there is better training and recognition of S.E.N.D. across the school, the formation of a virtual school, the R.O.N. (Record of Need) matrix between structures. I think that would be an ongoing process because things are changing so rapidly. There are other areas which have been happening, but N.A.S.E.N. had a huge number of wide-ranging recommendations. I think there are 2 points there. One is I wonder whether the nature of them was ever going to be achievable entirely without looking again, as we have done this time at the S.E.N.D review. I think what we have done now helps us to, if you like, reset that button on the N.A.S.E.N. review and see where we are going. I just want to make that point. It was not entirely no recommendations were taken from the N.A.S.E.N. review. Things have been acted upon and I think it is unfair for me to look previously to me and say nothing happened. They did, just not everything; you are absolutely right.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

It is not that nothing happened, it is just that there are recommendations that have not happened yet and have not been acted upon. Minister, how will you ensure there is greater consistency in the quality of S.E.N.D. provision across all government-provided schools?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

One of the things is about collaboration and using good practice. One of the things that the S.E.N.D. review said was that there are pockets of very good practice across our schools. We need to ensure that they become well-known, they are seen, they are visible across schools and that spirit, that attitude of collaboration, is developed across our schools. This is not about beating a school with a stick if they are not necessarily getting things the way that they want it to be. It is about supporting and using that support where it needs to be, where it is best used. I think that collaboration across schools is one of the key areas in that.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Is there a plan for how to make that come into effect?

Interim Chief Officer, C.Y.P.E.S.:

My colleagues in here have done a significant amount of work they are doing, but the Minister mentioned collaboration, which is very important. That enables schools to work together to drive the improvements forward. But centrally from the department, we have been pushing inclusive practice in schools, which is centred on inclusive teaching. So if you want to explain a bit more about what that is.

Head of School Review and Inspection:

Yes, what we have been running is a series of workshops identifying best practice from other jurisdictions. We have worked with schools collaboratively to develop a new language for inclusive practice guidance, which is now being piloted and trialled across our schools. Teachers and deputies have been part of those 3 workshops; they will continue over the next 2 years. We are looking at our provision for universal provision; richer classroom experiences for all children and a development of that common language will enable the collaboration across schools. We have already shared 3 case studies of how schools are launching this, and we move on to a next step then to look at targeted provision for children with identified special educational needs. This is a clear programme over the next 2 years. We re-initiated this in the summer and early signs are looking very promising. It has been well-received by schools. Headteachers, deputies have been really quite enthusiastic in their response. Many have already started as early adopters. Others who have not yet had a chance to start have put it into their January I.N.S.E.T. (In-Service Training) training for their staff to launch then.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Is there a name for this programme?

Head of School Review and Inspection:

Inclusive Practice Guidance.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

I think you have got some questions on the school review coming up, but I think that is an integral part of what we are doing as well; the nature of the school review and the way that will work to improve schools, not just label schools, which I think is really important. But I am sure we will come to that.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Minister, how will the voices of children and young people with S.E.N.D., as well as their families, be incorporated into the development and monitoring of strategies? How much are they being listened to?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Do you want to answer, because I am coughing, sorry.

Interim Chief Officer, C.Y.P.E.S.:

I can start off with the first part, and then maybe Matthew can come in, particularly around school review. But I mentioned earlier about governance arrangements, and we want to ensure that we have the voice of parents and children feeding through that process as well, but also through school review we monitor feedback from pupils in schools as a major part of that.

Head of School Review and Inspection:

The use of pupil voice in the new 2025 Jersey school review is absolutely at the heart of the evidence gathering that we do. As part of the Island S.E.N.D. review recommendations, it is also that in terms of our plan and our immediate priority plan, is to increase pupil voice, making use of the organisations that we already have and structures there. There are a whole series of plans for how we can enable a working impact collaboration with schools, get that feedback from pupils and parents.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Can I add, we must not forget what I would call “business as usual” in schools? Every single day there are interactions between young people and teachers and parents with different levels of need within our classrooms that are just part of that good practice. Often if a child who may have a particular need but is succeeding, getting on in class, a particular class or a particular school, those things are really discussed with parents even or when parents drop their children off, so that is often not seen. I think we emphasise when we could do more but the business as usual part of that is really important, and I want to say that publicly because I want to credit teachers for what they do day-in day-out, often above and beyond just everyday teaching. I think that is really important to recognise as well.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Of course when asking about the parent and child voice there is no suggestion that there is anything not being done well by teachers.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

But we want to do it better.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

So you mentioned about the school review and the efforts to hear the parent and child voice through there but is that to do with ... how often does that happen? Is it the review of every few years?

Head of School Review and Inspection:

The reviews of course go on a 3, 4-year cycle. Our surveys we use in those are actually published as part of the reviews; an appendix there where we are encouraging schools to do that pupil survey themselves. When the immediate priorities plan comes out, a lot of that will include about how we anticipate to use the participation standards going forward to survey pupils and family and get their voices in our strategic planning going forward, the ongoing monitoring of the work as we respond to the Island S.E.N.D. review. So it is not wholly on the Jersey school review, but because the Jersey school review has such a focus on inclusion in its new iteration, it is offering us a good model to start from.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Of course. With the surveys, how often do they happen at each school?

Head of School Review and Inspection:

Schools typically do their own annual surveys.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Annual surveys, okay.

Head of School Review and Inspection:

We would also want to, as part of that consultation, consult via Youth Services, the School Council Network, Youth Parliament. There was a great example of how Youth Parliament fuelled some really strong additional guidance and support for the P.S.H.E. (Personal, Social, Health and Economic) programme recently. There are models that we have to replicate in its work too.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

I think, as well, you need to point to this point that the S.E.N.D. review said, which was that often there is a developed a culture of complaint, and we need to move away from that to a culture of co-operation and collaboration rather than complaint. I think that is where the steps will be, and that is where that voice is. I think that is where we recognise what happens every day and frequently in our schools, emphasise that, and then that trust of parents say, "Well, things are not going well. I know where to go to, I can talk to my classroom teacher first, I can talk to the school first" and 99

per cent of the time the problem is solved. "I know they care about my children." That is a really important part of this.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Okay so with all these plans that have been mentioned, you have also talked about a 2-year programme and so on for some of this, because I was going to ask about the timeline for implementing the reviews recommendations. But is that the sort of expectation over 2 years generally or no?

Interim Chief Officer, C.Y.P.E.S.:

No, I think the initial immediate plan is over the next 6 months to a year. We plan around Easter time to publish a 3-year plan and then we will have a longer-term plan, which is up to 7 years because some of this will take quite significant work. But we want to show the progress that we are going to be making through those plans.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Will that include a way to measure the progress as well?

Interim Chief Officer, C.Y.P.E.S.:

Yes, absolutely.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

And be reported?

Interim Chief Officer, C.Y.P.E.S.:

Yes, without a doubt. It is absolutely essential we understand how far we move on this. Having outcome measures that we agree at the beginning of the programme, that we share, and that were then monitored and held to account by has got to be in place. We will be obviously talking about those.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

And made public as well?

Interim Chief Officer, C.Y.P.E.S.:

Yes, that will be made public.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Can I just say as well, when we do that - as we do that - we need to be transparent and open. If some of those outcomes are not happening, the last thing we want is a tick-box exercise to say we are okay, we are okay, we are okay. This is what has happened before, and I do not blame schools for this because the culture has been you could be in trouble here. That is not what the review system is like now. It is about self-improvement, openness, honesty, professionalism. We have that professionalism there, let us let it flourish and let us let it do its job. That is what I want to see happening in our schools.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

I just have a question, which is about the transition. Could you outline, Minister, what funding and support is currently available to assist young people with special educational needs and disabilities in their transition into further education training or employment after the age of 18?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

After the age of 18, yes there is a gap there. There is support in the Mont à l'Abbé and in Highlands. Do you mean when they go to university?

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

For anything that they need to do once they reach the age of 18. I think in the U.K. (United Kingdom) there is a plan to support them in continuous education, if that is what they want. Do you think that the current support is sufficient here?

[10:15]

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

It has been a priority since the N.A.S.E.N. review. Looked-after children lasts until they are 19, so the children who are looked after are under 19. Also children in care, care leavers, have a provision until 25. I personally think that is the way we should be going with our R.O.N.s or whatever the R.O.N. becomes. They are changing in the U.K. and I am trying to remember the name of it, and I should not try to remember because it has overloaded my brain. I cannot remember what they are calling them now. What are they called?

Head of School Improvement and Advisory Service:

E.H.C.P. (Education, Health and Care Plan). Ours is a Record of Need.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Although I think there are some issues with those. There is good practice in Mont à l'Abbé, as I said, and Highlands. I will say the problem is ongoing as well but it is not good enough at the

moment absolutely. We need to look at ways in which we can support that. Do you want to add anything to that because they are missing gaps in their provision?

Interim Chief Officer, C.Y.P.E.S.:

No, I think obviously we have provision around the Youth Service as well, but it is certainly in terms of transition.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Okay, so this an area that you are going to be looking at?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Yes, 16 to 18 I think we have support still in schools and in colleges because it is part of what we do. Post-18; if students go off to university, universities have lots of support mechanisms in place, and that has been a huge improvement in universities, I have got to say, over the last 10 to 15 years, probably longer than that. We have made some provision for online learners. O.U. (Open University) do some really good support, if you take a degree with the OU. They provide, they support really well. So there is support out there. It could always be better, I think, because it is specific to need. We do fund that additional support in universities when applications are made, which could be one or 2 hours a week of one-to-one support while at university. That provision is changing because the rules are changing in the U.K., and we have had a few appeals on that which we have upheld, and we are trying to provide support where we can.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

You have talked about the students that are going off to university but for those students who are at Mont à l'Abbé with intellectual difficulties that would, for example, be transitioning into Highlands, what is the provision that is currently available at Highlands for those transitioning from Mont à l'Abbé?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

There is a lot of support from the Highlands team. What are the Highlands team called?

Head of School Improvement and Advisory Service:

The Pathways.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

The Pathways team, for example. So there is support at Highlands.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

Up until what age?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Up until 18, 19. I will say up to 19 because ...

Deputy H.M. Miles:

Because that is what the law says.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Yes, that is what the law says.

Head of School Improvement and Advisory Service:

The challenge with comparisons with the U.K. is the Record of Need or the E.H.C.P. in England with regard to 25, because our compulsory education finishes at 16 and provision extends to 19 for young people; the Record of Need. So we currently do not fund Highlands or Mont à l'Abbé to support children past the age of 18, 19. That is the area that would need to be developed.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

In terms of young people as well, some of the stories that we hear is that you are providing an education provision up at Highlands but not necessarily any kind of social support, whereas you have got children, young people being picked up to access their education at Mont à l'Abbé suddenly they do not have the means of actually accessing Highlands, they do not have support during breaks, they do not have support during the lunch hour.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

I am surprised at that.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

So what are you doing to facilitate that?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

I am surprised at that because there is very much a well-being team in Highlands and a support team there.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

But in terms of transport, for example?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Transport is more challenging, I am sure.

Head of School Improvement and Advisory Service:

Again, it will depend on the Record of Need. So the Record of Need should be reviewed annually and would define the level of support and need that that young person needs, depending on the level of disability, depending on the transition. What we have seen is that 10 years ago there was very little need for a 6th form provision for young people in the Mont à l'Abbé space, and young people would have transitioned mostly at 16. We have now got a higher level of need in our special schools and so the first thing that has changed is we have got young people in the 16 to 19 space in Mont à l'Abbé, and that is reflected in the new build. We built a 6th Form Centre 18 months, 2 years ago it opened I think; a little bit longer. That was needed because of an emerging and different need. The level of need that Highlands are supporting is impacted by those young people staying in Mont à l'Abbé but the level of need across the piece has continued to rise. So it is being aware of it. But the level of need per family should be done through Record of Need and then it will be done case by case.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

What plans have you got to make sure that they are not dropping for COVID-19 in terms of education and getting something delivered until they are 25?

Head of School Improvement and Advisory Service:

This is more about cross-service working. There are working groups taking place with children's social care, with health, so that we are working together collaboratively to ensure that as young people transition from an education support system to an adult support system that those safety nets are in place and that partnership working is in place.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

Are you confident that that is going to be successful?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

I think it can be successful. There are successes already. I know of students who ... some I used to teach actually. I was speaking to one of their mums the other day, who is successfully working now, full-time job, has gone through that entire process, is doing really well. Part of that is also the support from employers and we have to work on that area as well, because we need ...

Deputy H.M. Miles:

There will be a cohort of people that will never be in employment.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

There will be but there will also be a cohort of people who could be employed if they are given support by employers. I think as an Island that is something we could improve with as well.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

But we have the Jersey Employment Trust.

Head of School Improvement and Advisory Service:

I was about to say, the Jersey Employment Trust would be the support; it would be part of that ...

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Absolutely, but it could ...

Deputy H.M. Miles:

How closely do Highlands work with the Jersey Employment Trust, because they are based up there as well?

Head of School Improvement and Advisory Service:

There are connections all the time. The numbers are relatively small, so it is done on a case-by-case basis and you are finding really quite bespoke packages emerging. depending on the type of need that the young person has.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

You are right, the word is “bespoke”. Each person is individual and has to be met individually and that can be very different and also different over time with maturation.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

Okay, thank you. We have just been talking about Records of Need, which is my next question. Minister, have there been any changes to the criteria for establishing a Record of Need or to the processes for supporting, reviewing and evaluating Record of Needs in line with N.A.S.E.N. 2021 recommendations, which was for greater transparency and expanded S.E.N.D. and inclusion team involvement?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Yes, it is a very long question. The simple answer is yes. Do you want to detail some of that for me?

Head of School Improvement and Advisory Service:

So 2 different streams of work have taken place. The main one is that we did a trial for a year and a little bit of the E.H.C.P. template, which we joined in alongside the English trial. A number of local authorities across the U.K. trialled a new mechanism. We joined that trial. The U.K. analysis was that that did not work as well as they had hoped, and they have stepped back from that pilot. We have also stepped back from that pilot,. We are just in the process ... we did a full survey of all the families; there were 19 families involved in that here. All of them were surveyed and gave feedback alongside professional schools and others relevant. That evaluation is now informing how we are moving forward. It has been iterative, but involving parents, involving young people's voices, and with the professionals as well.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

That is good. The feedback you got, was that positive, mixed, not positive?

Head of School Improvement and Advisory Service:

The main changes that that pilot has brought in is the raising of the profile of the parent voice, and placing ... it was there in the code of practice, but what the new form did was create sections specifically for family voice, child voice, and that will definitely be maintained on how the R.O.N. develops. That part would be front and centre of what we do moving forward.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

Do you know when you might have something ready that is ready to go ahead?

Head of School Improvement and Advisory Service:

It is integrated into the process around the S.E.N.D. review. As we publish that report, those revisions will be part of that, and the timeline attached for that work.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

Will there ever be a point when the Record of Need, or E.C.H.P., whatever you are going to call it, is statutory in Jersey?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

That is a really good question. My answer would be at some point that probably the answer is yes, but what form that would be is ...

Head of School Improvement and Advisory Service:

It is statutory.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Are you talking about the new ... whatever changes we make?

Deputy H.M. Miles:

It is not a statutory thing to have a Record of Need and it does not automatically come with money; it does not have the same status as it does in the U.K.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

I see. There are 2 things there. Yes, that looks very good initially, and I would sit here and say yes, but you have to be careful as well, that you therefore do not chase the money with a Record of Need, which is what has happened in the U.K. a great deal. I think we have to be very careful. We want something that works to provide the best we possibly can for our young people. If that comes with money that is great, but that is not all it is about. It is about support, understanding that child, understanding the relationship with the family and including the family in that. Often helping the family as well because there are changing circumstances, especially as children get older.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

I am going to move on to some questions about Jèrriais. Could you just tell us how Jèrriais is currently integrated into both the primary and the secondary curriculum and whether you have got any plans to expand its presence in core subjects or extracurricular activities?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Jèrriais is taught mainly in primary schools. There is a history to that, because the first 5 years of the Jèrriais project was about bringing teachers who will be delivering the teaching up to their standard with their language acquisition, so that has been a process as well. That is the foundation we have to remember as well. It is delivered in key stage 1, key stage 2, key stage 3. In key stage 4 it tends to be in small groups, one-to-one lunchtime and after-school classes, and in key stage 5, one-to-one lunchtime and after school. It is not an integral part of the curriculum or put into the curriculum at this stage, but I think as we come up with the new plan for Jèrriais, which should be implemented starting next year.

Head of School Improvement and Advisory Service:

It will be during 2026.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Then that is one of the areas that we need to look at. The focus needs to be on the ... we need to decide where our focus is going to be. We employ teachers to teach, and we want them to teach Jèrriais. How you incorporate that curriculum-wide, I am not a language specialist. I could not tell you how to do that. I think back how will I have done that in science. We get to the token gesture

of key words, which I suppose is a start. I would encourage that, but it is just a question of how we do that.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

What measures are currently in place then to ensure that there are sufficient qualified teachers to deliver the range of Jèrriais lessons across the schools?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

What measures are in place? There are 5 teachers employed on teaching contracts, so they are employed as teachers on the teachers' scale, teachers' pensions, et cetera, and they have timetables in schools. I think we need to maximise that teaching timetable, and I think over the last few years there has been a perhaps not clear delegation of what is the teaching and what is the other cultural areas. We have been discussing how we can make that division clear so we can free teachers up free to teach, which I think is really important, particularly as they have gone forward, the work of language acquisition and planning, and there is a lot planned now. So there are a lot of lessons available in our schools so that we can increase the contact time of that teaching. Then the other areas, which are perhaps more cultural, we can define perhaps in other areas, away from just strictly the teaching.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

It is a tricky balance, is it not?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

It is. Because if you are teaching French or Italian you have resources at your fingertips that you can buy from Amazon or anywhere else. A lot have been developed over the last few years. We have a lot that is developed over the last few years and there are some other things.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

So what professional development opportunities exist for the Jèrriais staff?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Do you want to answer that, Rachel?

Head of School Improvement and Advisory Service:

So the Jèrriais team, all of the teachers have a weekly language lesson with the colleague who is the most fluent in Jèrriais. They have a weekly language lesson. It depends on their fluency how much time they spend on that. They also go to conversation lessons. In terms of their language development, there is that. They have also worked very closely with the French experience, which

we continue to run successfully on-Island in terms of language pedagogy. So in terms of how they resource the lessons, how they plan lessons, that crucial approach to language teaching of recycling and introduction of new concepts, new vocabulary, what a good resource looks like which is age appropriate. One of the challenges when we started early on in Jèrriais, it was not that there was no teaching resource; there was. There have been Jèrriais lessons for adults for years and years and years and there was a well-established ... it was not an accredited G.C.S.E. (General Certificate of Secondary Education) programme, but there was a well-established and well-resourced G.C.S.E. level programme available, but what it was not was appropriate to teach in schools to young people. It certainly was not appropriate to teach to primary school children. The development of appropriate lessons by primary ... so the Jèrriais teachers who work in primary schools are qualified and experienced primary school specialists. They were not initially trained in Jèrriais, they were trained as primary school teachers, and then they apply their Jèrriais learning to their best practice, supported by linguistic specialists. So they have language C.P.D. (Continuing Professional Development), they have language acquisition C.P.D. Then they also have good connections with L'Office du Jèrriais, and with the team working out of Jersey Heritage.

[10:30]

That broader cultural piece and the development of the corpus of language. The lead colleague is constantly working with those specialists in the Heritage team, creating that language, which then is disseminated out to the team.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

Where is the Jèrriais team based then? At Education or at Heritage?

Head of School Improvement and Advisory Service:

They are based in the Highlands building. They are largely peripatetic, so essentially when most of Education moved to Union Street to town, colleagues who are peripatetic, who spend more than 50 per cent of their time in schools, it is more appropriate for them to be based where they have a base where they can put their resources, but then they will do a morning in one school and then go to a different school for the afternoon. Where they are based is in Island schools. That is where you would want them to be if they are employed as teachers.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

U.N.E.S.C.O. (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation) has classified Jèrriais as a severely endangered language. What role does the education system have in its preservation? How is that aligned with the broader Jersey language policy for education?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Well, the teaching of a language is, I suppose, fundamental to that language existing. The process of training teachers ... the real difficulty is not just that we have language, and people speak the language. It is how we are going to ingrain that in the teaching of it for young people and further on. To do that you have to have skills to teach. We have taken teachers, got them to become Jèrriais teachers, and they are delivering that as lessons in schools. I suppose that is the main part, the role of Education in terms of as a department, our teachers can play in that, in the delivery of teaching of that language. The Heritage part, this is where we have to get the balance right and how that happens. I think it fits in with our wider language policy in the same way; the delivery of good quality lessons in a language, which is what we want to do to enrich people's experience of that language and give them the opportunity to learn it. We do have a problem that there is not a qualification.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

When are we going to see the G.C.S.E. if we have got all these G.C.S.E. resources?

Head of School Improvement and Advisory Service:

We have tasked the team to work on that. We have tasked the team to work on accreditation. Whether we go with the G.C.S.E. or whether we go with ...

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

I was going to say, it is not just ...

Head of School Improvement and Advisory Service:

Whether we go with the European language approach, which may be more appropriate. G.C.S.E. requires that the 4 areas of speaking, listening, reading and writing, it may be more appropriate to focus on speaking and listening for Jèrriais, particularly for younger people. I think also the balance is the extent to which we want to produce resources and lessons for young people and children and for adults, because again in the protection of an endangered language there is a great value in ensuring there are adult speakers alongside growing new speakers. And following people's passion.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

Therein lies one of the challenges, because obviously, C.Y.P.E.S., you are focused on children and young people. There just seems to be some tension between what is happening for children and young people and what is happening in the broader community. I guess that comes in as part of the U.N.E.S.C.O. ...

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

I would not call it tension. I think “tension” is the wrong word. I think everyone is trying to work really well together to get how they can do that. We certainly have a lot of support from Heritage to deliver what we deliver to enrich it and so on. I think it is just delineation of what you are trying to deliver. This might just be me with my education and teacher head on, but if I am a teacher I want to focus on that teaching, to be clear as to what I am doing, clear on what I am delivering. A qualification may help with that, not necessarily G.C.S.E., I would say. It may be more like the D.E.L.F. (Diplôme d’Etudes en langue française) qualification in France. I have my D.E.L.F. qualification, just to put that in there. I am very proud of ... that type of qualification might be useful. So I would not call it tension. I think it is just clarity of roles and clarity of what people are doing. Because if we get that right, you can help deliver and you know where to go when you want something.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

So the Jèrriais strategy has just run out at the end of 2025. How close are we to getting the 2026 to 2030?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

That is being worked on now, I believe, and finalised. I think there is a step on the new strategy because remember the first strategy had to focus on the teachers themselves, the language acquisition. I think that is ingrained in terms of how that happens now. I think I am right in saying that. It is really clear that if you are a teacher and you want to become a Jèrriais teacher there is your pathway to do that. So now the strategy can move on to look at the type of things you are talking about: what are we teaching, how we teach and what do we want the outcomes of that teaching to be. Also where is that delineation between that and the other cultural areas such as ... there is music and I do not want to say black butter making, but that type of heritage stuff that goes around it. If we get that clarity in that plan I think it will make it easier for everybody. It will also make it easier to say where the money is going, where the funding is coming from and who is responsible because I think if there is any tension - and I do not like that word - I think it is just ... when you are trying to look at a language that really has been in a bad place for a long time and you are trying to get somewhere with it, it is not easy. Any small steps are big steps. We need to recognise those. You have got to be fair with the strategy as well. If it has not been 100 per cent where we want to be there are reasons for that so now we build on what we have.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

In terms of sustainability and growth, would it be your plan to retain the teaching of Jèrriais within C.Y.P.E.S. or would it be to move the teaching of Jèrriais to Heritage?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

That is a good question. I think in terms of the teaching at this moment in time I think C.Y.P.E.S. is the best place for it because they are in teachers' contracts, they are employed as teachers and we know what that means.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

But other departments employ qualified teachers to deliver but not necessarily on the C.Y.P.E.S.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

That is a conversation that needs to happen longer term. At this moment in time, I think if we get the clarity of what the teaching entails, what it means and what it will look like, let us get that structured first and make sure we have absolute clarity on where we are. Then, to be quite frank, if we decide in the coming years that it does not have to stay here, it might be better in Heritage; everyone needs to be open to that discussion. I am not precious about it. It needs to be in the best place. But at the moment I think the changes we are making and where we have gone to, we have got a structure.

The Connétable of Grouville:

The next topic, ladies and gentlemen, is about the school reviews. What are the key changes, Minister, if any, made to the Jersey schools review framework following the analysis and consultation period in 2024-25 and how will these changes improve the review process?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

There are a couple of things and then Matthew can speak at length on this. But we will not let him go on too long. I mean that in the nicest possible way.

Head of School Review and Inspection:

Thank you, Minister.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Are you saying, Minister, that he goes on?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

No, that is not what I mean at all. One thing I want to say first of all is that we are not grading schools. We are not grading lessons. I absolutely support that, because you cannot sum up a lesson or a school in a single grade. I think if you do that you have missed the point, and that is what will be done as the most important point, and the headline and that is the end of it. This is a more in-depth process. The biggest change is that there is a new definition of the curriculum with 4 pillars: the development of the child, entitlement, equity and quality, which I am sure Matthew will be

pleased that I know off by heart now. That is a step forward. Pilot reviews have taken place and there has been learning from those. I think what has happened is we have got a stronger focus on, and I have written down quality, breadth, and the challenge of the curriculum, and the personal development of pupils. That fits in with what we are doing around S.E.N.D., but not just that but around the nature of our schools and the differences between our schools. We see every school as the place where individual pupils can develop to their utmost, and that is what we want to do. It is a supportive framework. The handbook is no longer written for external inspectors and reviewers in the Ofsted style but as a resource for school leaders and teachers to underpin self-assessment and school improvement planning. Now that is a lovely phrase. I know, as an ex-teacher, we have got some way to go to get that cultural change accepted because teachers have been through years and years of not having this. I am sure there will be teachers who will say: "Yes, you say that, but you know", and I mean it. I want this to be a self-assessment process. I want it to be a process where that professionalism can shine through and be open about the discussions that I had after those reviews to make improvement. Matthew, do you want to, you must be ...

Head of School Review and Inspection:

The handbook changes are quite significant. We have demystified the process. We put in the kind of thinking and questions that any reviewer will ask in different scenarios; what goes through a reviewer's head when they walk into a lesson, when they are having discussions with pupils, and so on. Building on that from my own background in Ofsted, but in terms of the work that we did, headteachers asked for this so they could support their staff, so it will support their ongoing monitoring so that it does not come as a surprise every 4 years. Very much the style that we have adopted is that schools are the engine of self-improvement. The review process comes every 4 years to hold up the mirror to say where you are at in that journey. The whole handbook - as the Minister says I could talk too long on this so I will not - is not just a book, it is a series of process and training that we have engaged with heads and deputies. There has been a whole package of professional development, the subject leads, and that ongoing process that we are working with, even support for school business managers with their areas of safeguarding that they would do, how we support schools continues. This is a really important part of the process.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Let me ask another question. How will the department ensure that the up-and-coming 2025-2029 review cycle is delivered consistently across all Government of Jersey schools and what measures are in place to support schools in preparing for these reviews?

Head of School Review and Inspection:

In terms of the measures that are in place, the handbook itself and the process was co-produced and co-designed with school leaders as we went through that iterative process and as we developed

and piloted. There was feedback after the pilots and how we have updated the process from the feedback from the 5 schools, which we are incredibly grateful that participated in the pilots. That changed not ... because we did a collaborative co-production, the what in our benchmarking approach rather than grading approach; so what we were benchmarking. There were minor changes to some of the text, but significantly we had got most of that right, which is really important. We were delighted with that. But the how we approach the benchmarking process and how we structure has evolved as a result. It evolved during the pilots too. I was involved personally in all 5 pilots. I quality assured them. As we have rolled out now, our first Jersey school review 2025 went live with J.C.G. (Jersey College for Girls) and has now been published. I have said to headteachers, I am personally on site quality assuring every off-Island lead reviewer's first go at delivering the Jersey school review. Even those who led some of the pilots, I am still there quality-assuring it because of that evolutionary process. That ensures the consistency. I cannot be there on all of them. But as we develop that programme, we also have a programme of quality assurance of the writing for the reports. We have a quality assurance process and training for our peer reviewers who are a head step to senior leaders in schools who join the process.

The Connétable of Grouville:

What about the mechanism for public reporting though and follow-up on recommendations and how will progress be monitored between review cycles?

Head of School Review and Inspection:

The subject of the review and the benchmarking discussions ... sorry Minister, did I chip in too soon?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

No, you carry on. Just as I find the right page, carry on. I was going to mention just one thing before you answer that. It was interesting recently we had a cross-nation summit and we talked about our review system, and there was a huge amount of interest in what we are doing; genuine interest. Because it is a cycle and a process that includes schools and is self-improving. One of the first determinations - and you will remember this about Ofsted - of a school that was very good or a department, it was a self-improving department. That came very early but then Ofsted did not really get to the stage of allowing that to happen, in my view; somebody who has been through it. But this is an integral part of what we are doing; I think that is really important. I can answer the question regards how we evaluate. There are account and budgetary measures in schools, there is monitoring self-evaluation annually. A school that is self-evaluating honestly and openly and professionally with its staff is a good school.

The Connétable of Grouville:

But what about with public, Minister?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

We do not publish grades but we do publish reports.

Head of School Review and Inspection:

The reports are all on gov.je. So the school's latest reports are all on gov.je.

The Connétable of Grouville:

That is one of my questions.

Head of School Review and Inspection:

If we had concerns with safeguarding we would come back and do a further monitoring visit. And we do do monitoring visits if we have ... in the previous review, if we had some worries around one of the 4 key areas that make a judgment on, we will come back. Those monitoring visits are not published. They are shared with the school, they are shared with the senior advisers, they are shared with the department, but they are not published because we do not grade schools. The only monitoring visits we publish, in the parental interest, is that school safe. We have published those in the past. The danger is when you have got a non-grading system and publish monitoring, not every school will get monitoring. If it needs monitoring; putting that in the public arena is important.

[10:45]

But we would use that information and this next iteration of the Jersey school reviews is not going to go in the same order that the last one did.

The Connétable of Grouville:

That, if I may, goes forward to my next question. As the reviews are undertaken on, as we know, a 4-year basis, would you consider regularly publishing a schedule of reviews planned for the year ahead? In other words, tell the public?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

No.

The Connétable of Grouville:

That is key, thank you.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

The reason we do not want to is simply so that we do not have schools planning for that cycle. That is not this process. If Ofsted published and you were given 6 months ahead, you would spend that 6 months purely getting ready for that review.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Sure, you are marking your own ...

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

I have been in a school in the U.K. and done that and it absolutely ruins what you are trying to do. That is not the way to do it.

The Connétable of Grouville:

That is an honest answer, thank you. How does the Minister ensure that compliance inspection for Jersey's independent schools are robust and aligned with the standards expected of government-provided schools?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

When you say "independent schools", do you mean the none-at-all States-funded schools? The ones that are entirely independent.

The Connétable of Grouville:

And the other ones, yes.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Beaulieu and F.C.J., I believe, use the independent school subject, but they have been involved.

Head of School Review and Inspection:

Beaulieu and F.C.J. have our Jersey Standards for Independent Schools and the Jersey School Review Framework report is published online on gov.je. De La Salle have gone down the process of becoming a British Schools Overseas, registering as British Schools Overseas, and engaging with the Independent Schools Inspectorate inspections. Their reports are published. The Independent Schools Inspectorate have 2 levels of inspection; the compliance one, which is absolutely in line with our Jersey standards. They are the mirror image of each other. Then they also have a quality which is in line with England's standards and ours. It is similar to ours in the Jersey school review level. Those reports are published and we have got links to them on gov.je as well.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

But all schools are welcome to be part of the Jersey review framework, and what I hope is that the validity of it, the quality of it, and the positivity of it to help schools improve is recognised and they will come on board ...

The Connétable of Grouville:

And encourage them to come on board.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Yes. But there are lots of inspection, if you want to call it that, with systems available for independent schools as well. I think that they are very keen to have those to show their qualities.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Yes, as independent schools. Minister, in terms of the impact on school improvement, what evidence is there that the first cycle of school reviews has contributed to measurable improvements in teaching quality, leadership, pupil outcomes?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Yes, that is a really good question because that is the overall question of all of those. I think what we have seen ... Matthew, the measurable improvements, do you want to just talk through a couple of those?

Head of School Review and Inspection:

I think there have been significant improvements not only in the common languages, leaders, self-evaluation school improvement planning processes. It has enhanced curriculum delivery, the quality of teaching and learning we have seen across our schools. It has given a structure for schools to be supported when there have been challenges. There has been a systematic approach against the previous handbook and how that works. There is a significant improvement that we can see in the ... when the Jersey school review first came through in 2017-18, schools received an unpublished pilot; all Government of Jersey schools. The comparison from then until the published later reviews which finished, 4 schools were ... I do not want to use the “inspection” word - my apologies - 4 schools were reviewed before the pandemic and had published reports.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Yes, we have heard this.

Head of School Review and Inspection:

Then after the pandemic, from 2022 onwards, we completed the cycle. The significant improvement part, because that was unpublished and it was pilot work, we cannot put that in the public domain,

but the significant improvement on individual schools is notable. That largely falls in the standards of leadership, the standards of the quality of teaching, and the improvements and the pockets of improvements. I know there are significant examples of improvement in more inclusive teaching has been picked up too across the board. The S.E.N.D. review has also picked up on that in saying that schools are on that journey.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Just one other thing on that. As we move forward and we are serious about schools collaborating across schools a lot more and schools are keen to do that, and with our demographics, that will be absolutely necessary. I think the review framework will help with that as well. Because that openness, the identification of good practice, the identification of places where a school would say: "Hey, look, we have seen that really good practice, we want a part of that as well" that is the way forward. Not to say: "You have failed, we are going to punish you." That does not work. This is about, again, realising and enabling the professionalism of our teachers who are - I have said this before - highly qualified, highly committed individuals to their job. They might go through some challenging times in a long career - of course you will - but they may need support staff.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

I have some questions now about recruitment and retention of teaching staff. Can the Minister confirm whether all teaching and support staff vacancies were filled for the start of the September 2025 school year and if not, what contingency plans are in place?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

I think there were; I cannot find the number now. What page is that on?

Head of School Improvement and Advisory Service:

Page 35. These are current vacancies, Minister.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Current vacancies are 2 for teachers and lecturers and 15 for support staff/teaching assistants, which are the same thing by a different name across our schools. We are recruiting well in those. Other support staff which might be office staff or other back staff in schools, there are 4 across our estate.

Interim Chief Officer, C.Y.P.E.S.:

We currently have 21 vacancies.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

But 2 of those are teachers and lecturers. I will not say what subjects, I do not think that is fair. I can tell you after.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

How is that managed then?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Well there will be a recruitment process. We have not had a huge issue with them so they may be being covered in other areas as we are going along, but there will continue to be a recruitment process. Let us be honest about it, it is difficult to recruit still. It is getting increasingly difficult in other jurisdictions, particularly in the U.K., because a lot less people are training as teachers and the jobs are becoming more difficult. Actually only having 2 vacancies is quite remarkable at this stage. But I think we can deal with those as well now. They are a very specific area of the curriculum that we want to address.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Fifteen support staff, you mentioned.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

I think that is because we have increased the numbers of teaching assistants that we want in schools as much as anything. We talk a lot about the increase in the public service sector, but a lot of that increase is front line teaching assistants that are helping our children in schools. Let us not forget that; 190-something over the last few years.

Head of School Improvement and Advisory Service:

In the last 2 years our local teacher training programme has had 100 per cent employment following that. In 2023, 17 trainees went straight into work for September 2023-24. In 2024, 11 qualified and went straight into jobs in Jersey schools. So that is a big part of supporting on the ground. Some of the vacancies that would be in place in September would not necessarily be a long-term vacancy. So the parental leave cycle, you might have a colleague who is taking 8 weeks in September but who will be returning in November; you would not do a long-term recruitment for that. That is where the supply agencies and local supply staff come into play.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Have there been any trends noticed or changes into issues with recruitment and retention across the schools?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

I think we have had a relative stability, if you can ever have stability in the teaching profession because you get movement. I was going to mention that on-Island teacher training programme and that recruitment has been successful. We are in a better position than a lot of places would be, but we were always conscious that that can change quickly and therefore be aware of it. I have to say, we have had nearly 2 years now without any form of industrial action. We have had positive contributions with the unions. We have got something in the Government Plan for the first time ever, actual money to try and do something about time in schools. I think all of those things do build up to improve what we are doing. I hope we can move forward and keep that profession going because of that.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Is there any monitoring done of the workforce stability across schools?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Yes. I do not know what the unit of stability is.

Interim Chief Officer, C.Y.P.E.S.:

We regularly monitor vacancies, gaps in schools. But as the Minister has said, they have been lower than they have been previously, going back about 3 or 4 years when they were a lot higher. We are more than happy to share with you the trends, if that is easy. I do not have them in front of me but we can share that information with you.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

They are not alarming trends. Overall it seems quite stable.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Yes, but again I will always say we will keep watching.

Interim Chief Officer, C.Y.P.E.S.:

We have to say they are the headline figures as well. There will be pressures in schools though.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Of course there will be.

Interim Chief Officer, C.Y.P.E.S.:

We have to just recognise within ... and teachers covering other subjects and so on. There will be pressures, however the overall number of vacancies has come down.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

So there is overall stability but is anything monitored and analysed at the level of an individual school to see if there might be issues at a particular school?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Yes, we would keep track of staff leaving because it is important to understand why. It may be that one school has a number of staff. At the same time you need to be prepared for that and you should be planning for that because there is a lot that goes on in retirement. I will go back to when I was a head of department, around May time it was very stressful because you were being really nice to staff saying: "You are not going to go to so-and-so, are you? I saw a vacancy. You are not going to leave, are you?" because you have got to recruit as well. There is always that is going to happen as well.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Okay, so when that is monitored, that is noticed, what happens if it seems apparent that a high number is leaving?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Well the first thing would be you would be in contact with the headteachers and the leadership of that school because you would want to have some idea as to why and get a clear picture of what is happening.

Interim Chief Officer, C.Y.P.E.S.:

An example of that has been we have had a secondary school that has been particularly affected by parental leave, which then puts pressure on their staff team. We become aware of that and we support the school to put measures into place.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Okay. We just heard about the teacher training locally, so what is the current uptake of the Jersey Graduate Teacher Training Programme and are there any subject areas where vacancies remain unfilled that has been particularly challenging?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

In terms of subject areas, there are 2 vacancies. I do not really want to say what the subject area is. It is not physics, let us put it that way.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

It usually is.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Physics teachers are like hen's teeth. They are really rare, difficult to find.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

You can say what the subject areas, could you not?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Well, I can do. One of them is a business studies teacher.

Head of School Improvement and Advisory Service:

Are you asking about teacher training vacancies?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Sorry, teacher training vacancies.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

I was asking about the Jersey Graduate Teacher Training Programme and if there are any subject areas particularly challenging. But also, as you mentioned about those particular vacancies, you said business studies.

Head of School Improvement and Advisory Service:

That is it, there is one unfilled business role on-Island at the moment.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

There are 2 teacher lecturers, so there is another one.

Head of School Improvement and Advisory Service:

The other one is the ongoing advert for supply. So we are always available to recruit people who want to join the supply agency. Those 2 vacancies, one is supply and one is for a business studies. We do not recruit by subject for the J.G.T.T.P. (Jersey Graduate Teacher Training Programme). We do open recruitment for any colleague on-Island who would like to be a teacher. Then the different routes will be available depending on subject need on-Island. If we had 10 people apply to be art teachers, for example, that would not be fair to recruit 10 people to teach art because there would not be 10 jobs on-Island for 10 art teachers. We survey schools every year and try to have as good an understanding as possible of vacancies that they anticipate advertising in the next year. Then we also target ... so we know that there are subjects which are harder to recruit to, and those are the subjects which have bursaries allocated to them. If you apply to train to be a teacher of science

or maths and you have the right graduate qualifications for that route then that is likely to be recruited. Subjects which are less frequently creating vacancies, we are careful to balance. We also recruit for primary. Of the cohort this year, it is 60:40 split, secondary:primary. It runs in roughly that sort of space, 60:40 ...

The Connétable of Grouville:

Sixty primary?

Head of School Improvement and Advisory Service:

Secondary.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

In a small Island, we will always have to make those sorts of decisions, because I think that is a good analogy. If you train 10 art teachers, you have to be honest and say there will not be 10 vacancies.

Head of School Improvement and Advisory Service:

It is the challenge of core subjects versus the foundation subjects. We do have quite good stability in our schools. So, if you get a job as an art teacher in school quite commonly somebody might stay there for 15, 20 years. So, it will be a long time. A big secondary school may only need 2 or 3 art teachers.

[11:00]

It may be 10 or 15 years before an art vacancy comes up in a secondary school, even across all of our secondary schools. So, it is about creating that pool of talent. We encourage colleagues to look at being able to teach more than one subject for that reason. Quite often they do a second subject.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

I was going to say, those conversations will happen in the beginning, and the realism of if I want to go and say: "I would like to be a teacher of philosophy" I will probably be told: "You are unlikely to get a job doing that here", and I might have to make my decision.

Head of School Improvement and Advisory Service:

Yes. But you might qualify in English and philosophy, or R.E. (religious education) and philosophy, because religious education would be across the piece, and then philosophy A level might be a subject that you could teach in one or 2 schools. So it is quite a balancing act. What feels like a

shortage can simply be that there is not a locally-qualified candidate at the moment on-Island waiting for a history job. That is where the balance gets quite subtle.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Yes. I suppose in a small community ...

Head of School Improvement and Advisory Service:

We are a small community, and people are not moving across county boundaries to come in and out of schools and colleges.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Thank you for that. I now have some questions about early years. Minister, what steps are being taken by the Department to ensure that nurseries and childminders are prepared to deliver 15 hours of funded childcare per week from 2026?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

I am going to be very careful in my wording so that it is clear. I know you do press releases after this. Last time I spoke to a panel I do not believe that what I said was accurately reported, so let me be really clear. The 15 hours of paid 2 to 3 nursery hours, £11 an hour, is being prepared, has to go through the Government Plan. We have had really good communications with the childminders who are on board, and the final stages of how that will work is happening with them. I am surprised that has not happened with nurseries. We developed the rate with a member of staff, an officer from Economic Development, so that they were purposefully independent from the department. They were looking at it with the Jersey Early Years Association, in conjunction with them. The rate that was initially set was £10.24, we have said £11 so that there was a slight upgrade to that to encourage and sustainability. I think that is a fair rate and that is the rate going forward. We cannot move any further on that in terms of it being like the N.E.F. (Nursery Education Fund) at the moment, although the door is still open for nurseries. Some nurseries have accepted that, to step up and say: "We would like to be part of that", and we hope that happens. However, we are working at pace and actively to create a system where we can pay that direct to parents. Nurseries can just carry on doing what they are doing, provide the hours at the rate they are providing the hours, and then parents can claim that money back. It will be in arrears, but it will, if we get this through the Assembly and we have the system that we have, which is ready to go nearly, be available in terms of paid from January, but in arrears. There is something called the Public Finance Law, so we have to prove the use of that money, and that is important. We are in a place where this can be happening with all the little bumps in the road. We spent a couple of months talking with the Jersey Early Years Association developing a rate, and that put us back 2 months. If we were now in a position where that was being supported more widely we would be moving faster, but we have to deal with what we

have. Therefore, we will deal with what we have, and the underlying principle to this is to enable parents to get some help with their nursery. Can I just say one more thing, which is really important, and was reported really badly? This is 15 hours. If you have a 20-hour job, you pay for 5 hours, you still get the 15 hours. If you have a 35-hour job, you pay for 15, and you get 20 hours.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

I was asking about what steps you are taking. So, just to make sure that this is accurately reported, you were talking about how you are working at pace, that the plans are for it to be paid to parents directly?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

That is our plan, that if we are going to initiate this from January it is the only way forward because we have not had the wider buy-in to something we thought we had agreed that we would have wanted. This is another option that we have, and that would be a trial for the first year before we engage things.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Minister, you used an acronym. I think for the public, we should explain what the N.E.F. is for the recording.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Yes. The Nursery Education Fund is the 3 to 4 year-old fund. That is a fund that has been set up for some years, which is paid directly to the nurseries for 30 hours for 3 to 4 year-olds. We had a similar system for the 2 to 3 year-olds, but there seems to be some issue over some of that. So, one of the other options we have is to pay directly to parents.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Thank you for that explanation.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Is the 15-hour provision intended as a first step towards expanding funded childcare hours in the future?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

I cannot speak for future Governments but if it was me, then yes, exactly it would be. I think it is an identified need in our society. This is worth £6,127 a year. I think that is the correct figure. If I am out by a few pounds, please forgive me. For a family with a child of 2 to 3 years old in nursery, that is significant money. Of course, it would be great to extend that. I will say, and, Deputy Miles, you

know because you have been, as you would call it, in the big chair around C.O.M. (Council of Ministers), getting money out of Treasury is not the easiest thing on earth. I think that would be the most difficult part. We have money to start this for 15 hours, term time only, and I think, yes, it is a first step but let us get that ingrained first.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Okay. Do you think that for those parents or a parent who might not be in work at the moment, this will be sufficient to support them to transition back into work if that is what they are planning to do?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

At the moment there is nothing, and this is 15 hours. So, yes, I believe it is the first step in supporting them back into work. I do believe it will be a first step to help people back into work. Would it be better if it was 30 hours? Probably. Although I think we then have issues around have we got capacity for those hours. There will always be some issues found with it. This is the first step. It is funded. We have a plan to deliver it and we know it can be delivered.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

You have talked about the plan now to pay parents directly, which is a question I was going to ask you about how will that be done? Do you have any details on it?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

It would have to be in arrears. There would have to be some checks and balances put in place. But there are simple things that we are working on now, which would be an online application. It would require a social security number, social security number of the child, because they would have those. It would need some sort of receipt from the nursery provider, but I am sure they are provided anyway. If you are paying money, you want a receipt for what you are doing. Then an application would be made. Somebody would have to prove that is the case, and then money would be paid. There is a way of doing that. It will be in arrears. But during the first year we would work on a system to get that to work. If we continue that, we hope that by the second year, by 2nd January 2027, we would have something that we can develop over that year, or whatever Government that is here can develop over that year to have it in place to deliver that in advance. Obviously, it would have been easier probably to just pay with the N.E.F., but we do need to move this forward.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

So, the £1.5 million in targeted support for children with additional needs, how will that be allocated and what criteria is used to identify children who qualify for this additional assistance?

Programme Director, C.Y.P.E.S.

I will be formally working with the Jersey Child Care Trust on this after a comprehensive procurement activity. We are just in the process now of working with them over what will be called the “contract specifications”, so what mechanism will be used for eligibility. But we have got a lot of this that happens already, so this is not starting from scratch. Working with the J.C.C.T. (Jersey Child Care Trust), we already have a number of mechanisms by which we can identify and then help assess eligible children and families. We just want to scale up with this. We also, as part of that development of service specifications, want to try and build towards a more level playing field in terms of how you get support when you are very young, because this can affect then the transition, let us say, from a non-school nursery into a school nursery. We want a nice smooth transition. That requires therefore some consistency in terms of how support is identified and provided. The main things are we have identified a supplier to work with. We are well-advanced in developing those specifications. We have more money to invest approved already, so that is not subject to the Government Plan. That is already approved. We will have by the end of this year those mechanisms in place. But effectively think about it as scaling up what we already do with the Jersey Child Care Trust and moving towards a greater universality of support for those children’s additional needs across school and non-school.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

That is really important. I have seen that organisation working within nurseries across our Island. That already happens, it is a scaling up. I just also mentioned that there is the £0.7 million investment in speech and language therapy following a successful pilot with E.C.O.F. (Every Child Our Future), which is a really successful thing in our schools, and £0.6 million to continue successful pilot programmes that we have had in our schools. Douet Dinkies, play and learn, et cetera, which have had real impacts for children. This is a good blend of provision across need.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

Could I just clarify about the £1.5 million? You say that you have contracted Jersey Child Care Trust. At the moment, Jersey Child Care Trust are doing their provision up at d’Auvergne for the 2 year-olds; it is the pilot. Is the intention then that Jersey Child Care Trust will take over the pilot at Trinity and everywhere else?

Programme Director, C.Y.P.E.S.:

If I could separate them. The pilots, the play and learn, and Douet Dinkies, that are providing childcare for targeted support, they continue separate to that £1.5 million. The £1.5 million then is around inclusion provision across all settings, so some of that will go into schools, that will become the headteacher’s budget to invest appropriately.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

So, it is an extension of what they are already doing on a school level?

Programme Director, C.Y.P.E.S.:

Indeed. Some of that will then go into a third party; so private sector or third sector nurseries. But we are treating and funding the pilot totally separately, and that continues because that has been very successful, as the Minister has set out. The £1.5 million, that work with J.C.C.T., which is not £1.5 million to J.C.C.T., that is the ...

Deputy H.M. Miles:

No. But it enables. Yes, okay, and I discover that now, thank you.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Thanks for asking that, because I do not think I helped clarify that at all, but thank you.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

So that will help children with additional needs to settle into more spaces.

Programme Director, C.Y.P.E.S.:

Indeed.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

What mechanisms will be used to monitor the impact of the early years funding on families? How will that be monitored over time?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Yes, that is a good question. Part of it is uptake, but of the 15 hours that we are offering, over 80 per cent of families are already in nurseries. We know that they are there and this is just direct help for those families and those costs. There are some really interesting comments that were made around that online. I do not look online, but other people do. Talking about how the cost is crippling, this will help them enormously, et cetera. The uptake is one of the issues. Other monitoring areas?

Interim Chief Officer, C.Y.P.E.S.:

We have got Island outcome indicators, such as percentage of children aged 2 reaching developmental milestones, so monitoring that. Also percentage of children aged 4 to 5 achieving or exceeding the expected level of development in all areas of learning within the E.Y.F.S. (Early Years Foundation Stage).

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

I have to say, part of this is to support families as well. This programme is more about those families and those children, because families are struggling. That direct help will be, especially when you have a 2 to 3 year-old ... I have been there, it is really, really difficult.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

The monitoring, would it look at equitable outcomes for children from different backgrounds as well, how that might be affecting?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Yes. That is what the Island ...

Head of School Improvement and Advisory Service:

These mast ends would always be analysed through the lens of different pupil groups.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Yes, okay.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

That is a very important question. Thank you for that.

The Connétable of Grouville:

E.Y.F.S., could again you determine that acronym for us?

Head of School Improvement and Advisory Service:

Early Years Foundation Stage; nursery years and reception.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Early years. Thank you.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

Can I just clarify as well, this 15 hours of funding is not specifically allocated to parents who are already in work?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

No, because I think there are a number of things there. It is about access to quality nursery care. It may encourage parents back into work. They may have other children as well. It may help in terms of well-being. There are all sorts of reasons. But I can say that over 80 per cent of children already in nursery, and it is very likely that those parents will be in work. We are targeting widely, but I think

that is the right thing to do. I have to say, the biggest risk to this is probably the Assembly, because we have to vote on it, and misinformation. That is why I am really careful what I am saying about this emphasis on the 20 hours. To some extent, that is a large red herring. We are paying for 15 hours, this fits, we can do it, we have got the money to do it, it can work. We know we have had a few bumps in the road; that is fine, absolutely. I respect that completely, but we want to try and get this in place, so at least from January parents will know there is some provision there. If it is retrospective, so to speak, or in arrears, then so be it. But I think parents will still appreciate that.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

I am just conscious of time so I will ask these very quickly about higher education funding. Can you just tell us the steps that you are taking to ensure that the H.E. (higher education) funding remains financially accessible for students from low and middle income families?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

We have not changed anything in terms of the means testing. You can earn up to £210,000.

[11:15]

Policy Officer:

Around about that, yes.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

And still get some help with tuition fees. I think that is very generous. We have made a lot of progress. As soon as I took the job P.12 came in, which did determine a great deal of things I had to do with the amended version. We have completed the work on distance learning, on updating thresholds, because we have done that by inflation. I notice inflation has gone down in the U.K. today, so quite interesting. And tuition grant. We have looked at the research on a sliding scale, and the answer is that it is not the best thing to do. So I do not want to do that. We have reviewed the threshold for relevant assets and assessed the viability of student loans. Student loans I still firmly believe are not viable on this Island. We are an offshore Island; chasing them would be difficult. It would be as much to implement them as it would be the money that you are giving out, and I do not think that is a good use of money.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

Has there been any further discussions with Student Loan U.K. to try and allow Channel Island and Jersey students to access a student loan company in the U.K.?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

No. There is always going to be an issue with that because you are offshore and I do not think they can chase students here and vice versa.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

They could chase people who work here for the money, because you have got U.K. people who work here who are still paying off U.K. loans.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Okay. Yes. I personally do not think that is a good idea at all.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

One of the issues that we are hearing is obviously with the system that we have at the moment, even though these students are adults, they are dependent on their parents. When you have parents who are unwilling or unable to fund, we have a certain cohort of students who are unable to access higher education because they cannot get a loan. Have the department had any thoughts about how that might be addressed?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Yes. We have some ongoing work on independent students, which I think we will have by the end of the year to define on. We have looked at that really closely. Tania has done some really good work on that.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

That would require a change of definition of independent students?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

It would.

Policy Officer:

A change in a working interpretation of a financially independent student. That is not described in the law so we have a policy of how we have defined that, and the change is that we have reviewed our working definition.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

Does the department keep any data or have any information on the number of Jersey students who are unable to access higher education because we do not have loan arrangements?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

First of all, I think you have defined the outcome of the question there yourself. I am not sure that is entirely the reason why they might not be able to. That would be one option. If they have access to loans perhaps they would be able to access higher education because they could take a loan out, like they do in the U.K.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

But does the department hold any data on people coming to you?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

I do not know how we would hold that data.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

Coming to you to say: "I want to go to university, but I need to be funded"?

Policy Officer:

There is not a tick box that Student Finance have where they have had a conversation with someone and they said: "Because of your decision to fund me based on my parents' income I now cannot go", because that conversation may not always happen.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

There is an appeal system, though, and we would know about that, and we work as hard as we can to try and help young people. For example, the work we have done on distance learning will help as well. I do not think those numbers are large, and we would do everything we can to try and help. But there is a reality to the funding that it is not a bottomless pit and we have to have some rules around it.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

What is Government doing to review the level of financial support for the maintenance grants, given the cost of living?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

The maintenance grant and clinical increased by 2.5 per cent. Income thresholds were increased by 5.2 per cent in September 2025. The maintenance grant, in terms of inflation rates in the U.K. at a set time. So we are increasing by inflation.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

You are increasing the tuition fee in line with what the tuition fee ...

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Yes. We cannot tell you what that is yet because they have not announced what it is yet, but as soon as ...

Deputy H.M. Miles:

But it will be an automatic increase that you have to cover?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

We will have to, and that is the right thing to do. It would be good if we did not have to, but we do.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

Okay, thank you.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

I hope that reassures parents, so thanks for asking that.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Vocational learning, Minister. What assessment has the Minister made of the impact that the planned phasing out of B.T.E.C.s (Business and Technology Education Council) in the U.K. will have on Jersey students, and what steps are being taken to ensure continuity and choice in vocational education?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

That is a really good question. An enormous amount of work has been going on, and I want to thank particularly Highlands and Hautlieu who have been working together really well on that, and I know we have had talks at Curriculum Council. There have been discussions in the background with the U.K. I have spoken to the U.K. Minister. One of the things about attending events, like conferences, is to sit and have a lunch with the U.K. Minister and make the point that Jersey exists, and so does Guernsey, and we are using their qualifications; you have to think about that. They have rolled back a bit on B.T.E.C.s in the last few months. The alternatives, we are interested to look at the way that V-levels are being introduced.

The Connétable of Grouville:

That was my next question.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

We can talk about V-levels if you want. At this stage, it is unknown. The Government, they are looking at running a design implementation and consultation until January 2026. They are due to

be phasing from September 2027, with formal implementation by 2030. It is expected they will be regulated the same way as A-levels. But we do not know the way they will work. My concern, if I can put that first, is that if they are similar to T-levels, we cannot use T-levels here. They are an English qualification; we cannot use them. There are also obstacles to us using them because of the nature of their workplace, which is very heavily laden and, to be quite frank, there is some evidence, it was suggested to me, that they work well in big cities in the U.K., but that is about the only place they are working well.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Rather than rural environments?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

It is a real challenge for T-levels as well. We will need to react carefully to that. There are things called A.A.Q.s (Alternative Academic Qualifications), which we can use gradually. But what I would say is we are absolutely on top of the changes that are there, but there are some unknowns that we cannot deal with at the moment. B.T.E.C.s will continue in the next few years. They are not redundant, they are not being got rid of, they are just not being funded as much because the funds are going to all these other things, and if you do not fund a qualification eventually it will die off.

The Connétable of Grouville:

All of those have now been answered on that particular subject. School infrastructure, if I may. How is the department ensuring that school facilities remain safe, fit for purpose, and align with modern teaching and learning needs, including digital infrastructure and accessibility?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

There is an ongoing programme of repair and work that is going on in schools; that is going on all the time. Every time I have been in a school there is some work going on. The digital infrastructure is a challenge. It absolutely has been since I arrived on the Island, to be quite frank, and it has been something that we have been pushing for a long time. That is partly because of the way it was set up initially some years ago, being separate from the other infrastructure digitally on the Island. There has always been this problem of not being able to access government infrastructure. So, yes, work needs to continue on that. That is going to be a challenge for us. It does work in schools, but I think it could be better. I could flippantly say there is a lot less use of the wi-fi because children are not accessing their phones on it at the moment, but I do not think that is going to make much difference, to be quite frank. We have a corporate landlord, which is Jersey Property Holdings, and they have been carrying out their works. Our relationship with them has been improving and they have been really co-operative with us recently.

The Connétable of Grouville:

The Jersey Capital Investment Fund, if it is approved in the Government's proposed Budget, will any future developments for major educational or school building projects be taken forward by that vehicle?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Yes.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Can we specify, Minister?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

If we are going to look at the building of a new Highlands College, that is certainly in the plan, and I think that could be supported. Obviously, the school at Gas Place and the development of Rouge Bouillon. Shall I go over the argument of Gas Place again and how important it is to our schools? I think you already know about that. So, those are the major projects, yes, to put it quickly.

The Connétable of Grouville:

I think we are okay with that. What benefits will that have for C.Y.P.E.S.?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

There is a changing world of post-16 education. I will be publishing soon the report that came from myself and Deputy Alves, who is not very well today. Consultation with young people about post-16, we went into every single school and educational establishment, and, Tania, you were there for some of them as well, and we will be publishing that report. The nature of post-16 is going to be an issue going forward. How does it fit together? How do we access it? I think that young people have a particular view. But I do not want to spoil the report, because it is their report. I think it is really powerful, and I congratulate them on that. Therefore, new facilities will help us to build that. A new facility for Highlands College will make it incorporate that vocational element of education, really give it the importance that it needs, and we will futureproof it so that we know where we are going with it. It also will bring together that forced dichotomy between vocational and academic education. It is very difficult to find something that is entirely vocational or entirely academic. I never thought that is possible, to be quite frank.

The Connétable of Grouville:

What challenges, if any, do you think that structure could have for the entire C.Y.P.E.S. system, the challenges?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

If we do not build the Gas Place school, we are going to have real problems in the centre of St. Helier with our schools, and we are going to miss a massive opportunity to build a purpose-built school with community access from day one, which will be massively beneficial to that area. If we do not do something about a new Highlands campus, we are going to be flooding money into those buildings to constantly try and repair them, which I do not think is adequate. We need to get on with the build. These things will have structural effects on us if we do not, in the long term, get involved. But the investment fund is the vehicle for that. They are saying feasibility studies are happening through that investment fund already. It is moving at a pace. I cannot talk about them now because there is a lot of work to be done there, but a lot of work has happened. The feasibility of these projects is real and is happening already.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Excellent. Thank you for your answer.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

If I can just add to some of that. When we discussed the Jersey Capital Investment Fund and you mentioned the Rouge Bouillon School, can you give us some information about plans for that?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

We are talking about the upgrading of Rouge Bouillon School in the coming years. How we manage that rebuild, and also in conjunction, as I am sure you know, with the police and fire and ambulance. There is a project to be undertaken now, which I think goes across Ministries, so I think that is what we are talking about there. But with new facilities it would give us the opportunity to perhaps help with that build as well. With the change in demographics, and I am concerned that people are going on about the change in demographics, I am not entirely sure it is going to affect the centre of St. Helier and town schools as much as others, to be quite frank. We have to look at that as well. I cannot give you details on Rouge Bouillon at the moment from that investment fund. It is very early on. Sorry about that.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

There has been work going on about upgrading Rouge Bouillon School over quite a few years now, has there not?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

A lot of work has happened there, to be fair.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Are there any plans at all about extending the amount of space in the school, for example.

Interim Chief Officer, C.Y.P.E.S.:

As the Minister said, in relation to the fire and rescue site and looking at the overall site, but the building itself, although the site is not big enough for a 2-form entry school, does not help. It is very inefficient in its spread. The challenge will be with Rouge Bouillon is be building a school on a site where it is currently located. So, it is how we would do that to make the most efficient use of the space around for outside play space for young people.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Which is why I think the Gas Place site, which is clear and can be started, is such an important unblocker in the whole lot of this.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Okay. Thank you. Unless you have got any questions, we have reached the end of that hearing.

The Connétable of Grouville:

We are letting him off by a minute, Chair.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Okay. Thank you very much.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Thank you very much. Cheers.

[11:28]