



Children, Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel

Quarterly Hearing

Witness: The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning

Tuesday, 16th September 2025

Panel:

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

Connétable M. Labey of Grouville (Vice-Chair)

Deputy B.B. de S.DV.M. Porée of St. Helier South

Deputy H.M. Miles of St. Brelade

Witnesses:

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

Deputy C.S. Alves of St. Helier Central, Assistant 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 Advisory Service

Mr. A. Heaven, Assistant Director of Policy

[14:30]

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 16th September. 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. Just for introductions now, I am the Chair of the panel, Deputy Catherine Curtis.

Connétable M. Labey of Grouville:

My name is Mark Labey, Connétable of Grouville and Vice-Chair.

Deputy B.B. de S.DV.M. Porée of St. Helier South:

Deputy Porée, panel member.

Deputy H.M. Miles of St. Brelade:

Helen Miles, Deputy of St. Brelade, panel member.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Deputy Rob Ward, Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning. Got the timing right, sorry.

Assistant Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Deputy Carina Alves, Assistant Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning.

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

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

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

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

Head of School Improvement Advisory Service:

Rachel Baxter, Head of School Improvement and Advisory Service for Education.

Assistant Director of Policy:

Andrew Heaven, Assistant Director of Children Education's Policy, work in the Cabinet Office.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

All right, thank you everyone. We have got 1½ for this hearing. I will start with questions which are about Highlands College. Minister, could you start by explaining your department's position with regard to the condition of Highlands College estate?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Yes. We are aware that the estate is old and it needs repairs. Subsequently, at the moment, as of September 2025, 48 works have been identified for delivery across Highlands College estate. We have had 7 completed that are college-led, 26 completed by J.P.H. (Jersey Property Holdings) maintenance and 6 completed by J.P.H. led by capital projects. A further 56 works are planned across the estate, to be delivered collaboratively between J.P.H., C.Y.P.E.S. and Highlands College. I have got to say that we have had good conversations with the Minister for Infrastructure, it would be, would it not, with J.P.H. to make clear the situation there? I was pleased to see he had visited the work at Highlands College and I think there is a lot of remedial work going on now. Their campus is old, we need a new campus. Ironically, I think 4 years ago when I was sat at the other side of this table I saw the plans for a campus which never came to fruition. I am hoping that with the plans - and we might talk about those, I do not know - that in the future that will become a reality because it is certainly needed. This is, therefore, an opportunity for us to put that in the right place to do the right things, particularly as we move into a changing environment of post-16 education and the need for the Island.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Because I was just going to ask as well, the panel was informed that the principal considers a new campus to be essential and described the current one as outdated and inflexible. Do you agree with that statement?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Yes. It is outdated, however, I want to say that they do incredible work up at Highlands with the facilities that they have. They make the very best of them and are still extremely successful, so let us not forget that. But, yes, a new campus I think would be a good idea. The idea of putting it somewhere in town ... or I think it is a good idea to not talk about specific places yet. Because as soon as you start talking about sites, people become very interested in sites and you could be talking yourself into a more expensive site. But I think somewhere in the centre of town, particularly as we move into an era perhaps I would say where we are looking to get more people linked to businesses, so many businesses in town and to extend the night time economy in St. Helier, for example. The classes that run in the evenings could absolutely be a stimulus for that. I went to evening classes myself many years ago. I know there was certainly a social life after them and I think that is an important thing for town.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Okay, yes, that is interesting. But in the meantime, what funding is available to complete those interim works? Because I think we could see that the revised funding proposals were delayed and there is reduced capital support, so there is ...

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Yes, I can send the panel the 3 pages of numbers, I will not read it out. That could be a very, very not as exciting hearing as usual if I go through all the numbers. But I think, Keith, we can send those.

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

Yes.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

There is money put aside. I think also because of the work that is being done with J.P.H. and the college itself, it is much more directed. Where is the priority? So we can get things done that have major impact earlier on and I think that is happening. There will always be some problems because of their old buildings. Some of them are listed buildings as well. Let us not get into the discussion about listed buildings because that creates all sorts of problems. We are, I believe, getting a handle on that at the moment and we want to ensure that the college is certainly more than usable as we go through the next few years and safe is very, very important.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

I know that you have already mentioned about the number of works being underway. We understood that there is a further 59 works have been identified for 2026 and 2027. Do you see those being delivered within that time?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Yes, I do. I have 56 but it might well be that I have even more up-to-date or less up-to-date information than yourself. Because there is a couple of tasks no longer required for some reason. I cannot give any detail on that, they are very operational things.

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

Yes. What we can certainly do is send you a list of what the planned works will be for 2026 and the ones that roll into 2027, yes. That will also confirm what kind of budget as well for those years.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

That is great. Okay. The principal advised that: "The existing estate presents barriers to progress, including the facilities used for workshops, for life skills, students with complex needs and inclusion programmes, which are not fit for purpose." What are the plans to address these issues and are they are a priority?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Yes, I think there is 2 things. First of all, there is the repairs we are talking about. I think the principal does also realise that her role is to try and ensure that those things are happening and she has got to try and work around that with her staff as well and do the best they possibly can. I think Highlands do deliver to those students. It is not as if they are left with nowhere to go, nothing to do. It might not be ideal. With any head teacher and any principal, of course you are going to speak up for your college and I absolutely agree. This is why modern purpose-built facilities are so essential. What I would hope is that as we push that forward - whatever happens in the coming years, I hope it is pushed forward - those facilities then could be more purpose-built and more specific to particular needs. But I think Highlands does provide for people still. I know there are some challenges but I would give them credit for the work they do with young people.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

I think that students with complex needs are not able to study there at the moment. They cannot access the facilities they need, is that correct?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

We need some specific cases in that and look at a way in which we can mitigate that because I do not want that to be happening. We would need to be specific on that. I do not have the examples of those to hand. I do not know if we have any examples of that. But certainly if that is the case, then come and talk to us and let us do something about it because that is what we would want to do.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Okay. Is there a feasibility study underway at all? Because we also heard that unless a feasibility study into even a partial rebuild was not underway, that the intention of Highlands is not really able to ...

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Yes, I think that is the first stage. There are plans, ideas that are being developed. What is the project called? Future Investing ...

Assistant Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Investing in Jersey.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Investing in Jersey project and it went through a number of iterations of names. We call things a lot of different names a lot of the time. The Investing in Jersey project has got a basis behind it. But I think we need to look carefully at what is the best place. To me, the feasibility at the beginning is,

is it realistic to get the land, to get the position right and to make that possible later on? I would love to see building start on an empty site. If we could do that it would make it much quicker. Because if we were to rebuild up at Highlands, you are going to have a real problem because it is a functioning campus at the same time and that is very, very difficult. It is one of the reasons the original hospital did not happen because it was a functioning hospital and there was a huge argument over whether that was possible to do it. I think, yes, feasibility at the beginning of that is starting. I will say that planning is not my specialist subject, so I cannot answer brilliantly on planning.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Okay. But at the moment there is nothing happening like a study to do with a new building or a site or anything like that.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

How would you summarise that?

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

The way I would look at it, we are about to start that piece of work now following the announcement of the Investing in Jersey programme. However, there has been a huge amount of work done previously on this. I think the Minister referred to when he was at the other side of the table looking at plans. The college have done a lot of thinking on this, which we will be able to bring forth. As the Minister says, there are issues around site, size and all of those aspects. But in terms of what a modern college looks like, there has been a lot of work which will not be wasted, which we will revisit.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

I think as well we need to remember that when that work was done a few years ago there was a very different narrative in Jersey about population, for example. It was about the increasing population, now the issue is what has happening with regards to decline in population? Anything that is built I think there is an opportunity here to get it right for our current population as is and plan ahead and learn from the mistakes of the past. For example, we build schools, sometimes we built them too small in the past and we are now paying for that a little bit, although that will come through and it will be fine in the end. Let us learn from that and make something that we build future-proofed. In addition to that, we have a changing climate of qualifications. They are not going to stand still. They are not now and in the next 5 to 10 years we will have a significant change in the type of qualification post-16 has. We have to work across our estate, across all of our facilities; that is the reality of where we have got to go.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

I think probably my last question around Highlands touches on that. We have heard that Highlands would like to be able to offer high-tech training in green technologies and digital skills.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Yes.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Can you tell us about any plans or funding available?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Yes. Certainly in the green technology some of the apprenticeships are in low-carbon heating, for example, and the notion of a low-carbon heating academy is absolutely supported. They already do a lot of work in digital, computing and media. I am going to say this, I hope my quick adding up is correct. I am not going to go through the numbers with a maths teacher sat next to me. There is 112 students on those courses already, so it already happened. Yes, we would absolutely support that. Again, that is a changing world, the digital education world is changing. We learned today about they are making billions of pounds of investment in the U.K. (United Kingdom) with regards A.I. (artificial intelligence) and what that will mean. There was some really interesting stuff on the radio this morning about that. We have to adapt to that changing environment. If we get the timing right with regards a new college, understanding new qualification, understanding new needs, we could look at a sweet spot in education there, which really does well for our young people as go forward and for the future of this Island.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Okay, thank you. I think that is questions from me.

Deputy B.B. de S.DV.M. Porée:

Okay, thank you. Minister, this set of questions is in relation to the early years strategy and support.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Yes.

Deputy B.B. de S.DV.M. Porée:

What is the current status of the Minister's plan to transition 2 year-olds into primary school settings?
How is this being communicated to the sector?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Okay. First of all, it is not just primary school settings. I am very pleased that the Government Plan is published today, so I can talk about it. There is money, real money in the Government Plan of £3 million to extend the 2 to 3 year-old childcare offer for 15 hours a week. It would initially be term time only and there are some other reasons for term time only as well. We will start that as soon as we possibly can from January. People are already in nursery places, for example, it will help families. It could be up to £6,000 a year for each family and that is very, very good. That comes on the back of the pilot schemes that I consider to be a real success that we have run. The officers here know and Jonathan knows, we have been really ingrained in this for the last year. They will continue for the next academic year, not just the extension of hours in some areas but also the specific projects in primary school settings. But the 15 hours will be for all providers and for the first time including childminders and I think that is a real step forward. Because childminders were not included in the N.E.F. (Nursery Education Fund) for whatever reason. I am not questioning that reason now. But I think because of the nature of their work, then that 15 hours will help families with childminders as well. I have got to say I want to thank the childminders, we meet with them quite regularly. They are so open to training and what we are doing that I really think we can work well with them, as we can with the nursery sector across the piece. I think it is a very good news story. I hope the Assembly will support that and then it will be a good news story for the Assembly as well.

Deputy B.B. de S.DV.M. Porée:

Thank you. You just touched on the pilot schemes for the early years and you have mentioned, just for the purpose of the viewers out there, that you intend to make it a permanent situation for ...

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Yes. Do you want me to go through them?

Deputy B.B. de S.DV.M. Porée:

If you can. I was just going to ask you, what evaluation has been conducted and its effectiveness?

[14:45]

What consultations have been taken with private sectors? You mentioned the childminders but if you want to elaborate a bit more, please. Thank you.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Yes. In terms of the pilot projects and, Jonathan, stop me, if I have done something wrong here because I know this is essential to what you are doing. Parents in the surveyed focus groups have been overwhelmingly positive about the new provision. Genuinely it has worked well and those pilots ... D.I.N.K.Y. (dual income, no kids yet) is a great phrase. I have been asked to get that phrase

in a number of times. Plat Douet and d'Auvergne, certainly I have been positive about that impact. Plat Douet and d'Auvergne is impacting significantly on young people who perhaps need a little bit more support and is changing lives. I have had head teachers say that there are more children who are really ready for school; that was the aim behind that project. That part of intervening as early as possible to give support so that we prepare children for school is an integral part of this programme. The feedback in those terms has been really positive. Is there anything else that you want to talk about?

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

Just to answer the question in the context of evaluation and measurement. We took a set of baseline measurements at the start of the pilots. We did 2 interim checks as went along and had very, very compelling evidence of improvement in developmental progress. But also in the next month, 6 weeks, once the children are settled in, nursery will look to see a further assessment and evaluation of progress. That will continue throughout what will be the second academic year.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

Just to clarify that the 15-hour offer is a universal offer.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Yes.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

Okay. But the pilot schemes that we saw were really all for children who had additional needs, so they had been identified at the 2 year-old check.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Yes.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

They were not for children that did not have additional needs. Are those pilots going to continue in the same vein or will you be taking typical children into those primary schools as well? Because that is of great interest to the nursery setting.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Yes, let me answer and then Jonathan can step in. There was some wraparound time as well, which was not simply that. It was not just additional needs. If a project is set up with children with additional needs that is specifically for them in terms of the right environment, right time, right input, right skills; they will continue. We will support any nursery, any school, any childminder in terms if they want to

increase their skills in terms of taking children with needs. Yes, absolutely we can direct towards that. That is another positive impact of the universal offer. We can start to do that. I want the best provision for children we can possibly have, wherever that may be. If there is an identified need for training in private nurseries, come and talk to us. Let us look at that and let us do something about that.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

I just want to phrase the question maybe slightly differently just to clarify it. It was really clear at d'Auvergne that all the children in that provision had additional needs.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Yes.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

Is the suggestion that provision will continue to be just for children with additional needs or will you be mixing children who have not got additional needs with typical children?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

I see what you mean. That provision, I think, because it is a very small provision of 15 to 20 children ...

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

Sixteen children.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

Yes.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Sixteen children, will be specifically for children in need. Because it has a specific aim, which is to move those children on so they are ready to start school. I think what you are getting at - and I would agree - is that, yes, we want to make sure that every child is integrated in school. We do not want any separations. But at that stage because there is a real identified need and a real identified way in which we can progress young people so they are ready for school, that will enable that integration, if that is the right word. That might be the wrong word, mix is a better word, in school when they start school. The impact early on - and I think there is so much evidence, I do not think we need to quote it, to say that the earlier you impact the better it is and also for families. Families are growing in confidence with that support and that is such an important thing to do. They are

better off with their children, they are serving their children well, they are doing really well. I think it is the right thing to do, it is at the right time and it is a small provision but it works.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

Thank you.

Deputy B.B. de S.DV.M. Porée:

Minister, with regards to recent nursery closures, could you please tell us if any assessment has been done on the impact of the closures on childcare availability across the whole Island?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

First of all, I would not talk about closures. We recently talked about one nursery closing 2 rooms, I believe it was. The children and the families, I think most were accommodated in other settings and we can help to accommodate the rest. We have to be careful here because we have a huge amount of fantastic work going across our provision by private, in nurseries and third sector and there are many, many children going to very stable nurseries every single day. I think sometimes headlines do not think about the effect it has on families and them worrying. If there are specific cases we will intervene and give support. In this case we did. Officers positively engaged with the leadership of the setting and through representatives of J.E.Y.A. (Jersey Early Years Association), really positive interactions, which we are trying to do. I would say the nursery took the right course of action because it was a focus on safety and quality and that is imperative for us. If that happens, that happens and then we will deal with it and that is what happened this time. But the closures - I know I am being a bit pedantic here - but I think we have to be careful with what we say there.

Deputy B.B. de S.DV.M. Porée:

I do appreciate you making this particular point.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Thank you.

Deputy B.B. de S.DV.M. Porée:

Because headlines do spread.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

They absolutely do.

Deputy B.B. de S.DV.M. Porée:

It is not nurseries, one nursery.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Yes.

Deputy B.B. de S.DV.M. Porée:

Is it fair to say that contingency plans to support those affected families has taken place?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Yes, absolutely. But let me not underestimate, even if it is one family struggling with that place, we understand how serious that is. I think we have all been there in this room, a lot of us have been there with trying to find provision for our children and it is not easy. The offer we are making or the universal offer is not simply about helping families. It is also about raising the profile of the work. It is about supporting it with training. We have 33 students on the Early Years courses at the moment, I believe, off the top of my head or in apprenticeships and providing that second phase of the workforce programme, so that we have got the workforce there as well. I will say to all those people working in nursery, you provide an incredibly important service for our Island and for families, so please carry on. If people want to get involved in that, particularly, for example, if you are returning to the workforce after bringing up your own family, please contact us. There are courses available and that is a workforce that we could include in that.

Deputy B.B. de S.DV.M. Porée:

Thank you, Minister. I appreciate the clarification. Okay. I was going to touch on the early years workforce as well in regards to the next phase, as you have mentioned. More specifically, could you please confirm how many vacancies currently exist in the early years sector and what is being done to fill them in the short term, if anything at all?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Do we have a number of vacancies? We do not specifically. You have got to remember there are a lot of private nurseries, so it will not necessarily come to us with vacancies. On this Island, if you take any sector you would say you are just about getting there or there may be vacancies. It is not the easiest thing to do. I am sure that this sector is in the same position. I believe that 15 hours can be offered now because we are at a point that is stable enough. Also, that impact for families that have a place is so important because of the affordability of childcare. I cannot remember what report it was but I think it was 97, ridiculously high, percentage of families, when we said: "What is the biggest obstacle?" said it is affordability. We are responding to that. I think everybody knows it. For the first time we can now say: "Okay, let us put that money in there. This is the time to do that." I say now publicly, if it is not perfect and we have got a few issues with places, we will take those on board. Okay. But we are not going to not do it in pursuit of absolute perfection because it will be

difficult anyway and people might not get, necessarily, the days they want. But we are going to try and do the best we possibly can and it will make a significant difference for a huge proportion of those families.

Deputy B.B. de S.DV.M. Porée:

Thank you, Minister.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Thank you.

Deputy B.B. de S.DV.M. Porée:

Can I just ask you, what specifically has been done in order to recruit the staff necessary for those implementations? For instance, has the J.E.Y.A. been formally consulted? What is happening with your recruitment?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Yes, there have been a significant number of conversations at officer level with J.E.Y.A., which I think is more useful because they are directly looking at the projects themselves. The phase 1 of the workforce programme was undertaken. It was not as successful as our recruitment of teaching assistants. We used the same model and, to be quite frank, I was hoping that we are going to get the same outcomes. It was not quite as successful, could be all sorts of reasons. It might be due to all of the other factors that surround that type of work and the level of pay and hours, et cetera, et cetera. Phase 2 is now going to be entered into, which is to look at other ways in which we can try and attract ... Jonathan, do you want to talk about some of the interactions, the plans there and the conversations we have had? Because you were there.

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

Yes, of course. I think the Minister would agree, we agree, as officers, with the input from sector representation. For example, J.E.Y.A. have been very much part of the workforce and we would agree that despite delivery of that plan it has not changed the dial in terms of workforce. We are going back in again to say, right, what can we do differently? What can we learn from the U.K. in terms of their response to very, very similar challenges? Because this nursery workforce challenge is not unique to Jersey, it is very much a national one. The phase we are in now is under a request from the sector who have confirmed again this is key, the number one priority for them, under instructions from the Minister to come back in the next month or so with a revised second phase of workforce actions. But the test will be if these are delivered, will they make a difference? We have some deliberate and self-imposed constraints. We have not sought to change the regulatory standards. We do not wish to change things that might affect quality. But outside of those

constraints, what else can we do? That is the stage we are at now. I think we are acknowledging and accepting and then jointly, with sector representation, going back round into a second phase of workforce planning.

Deputy B.B. de S.DV.M. Porée:

Okay, thank you.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

We have got to be creative there. We do recognise that and I have already mentioned about perhaps those who are not as young - that is a much nicer phrase; I prefer that and I know the Constable of Grouville prefers that - or brought up their family and might want to come back and do part-time work. But with training in modern childcare, the techniques and the standards that we have there, we may have a workforce there. It is about attracting young people to stay in the workforce. It is about offering the training at the right time. Example being that childminders cannot train during the day, so we are offering evening training if they want to take that on, which I think is really important. It is that flexibility and it is being creative. It might always be a problem because we are a small Island and our workforce is limited, it will be. But we are going to do everything we can and we will be adaptive. Just to finish, I have already said the first phase was not as successful as teaching assistants. You should say I should not say that because I should try and hide that. We are not going to hide anything. We are going to say, look, we had some success and we are willing to work on changing, come and talk to us. The other thing with J.E.Y.A. is we work very, very closely in terms of the level for the universal offer in terms of the payment. We have done a lot of close work with them and a lot of close work with the officers, they are doing that day in and day out and feed back to me, et cetera, et cetera.

Deputy B.B. de S.DV.M. Porée:

I suppose that is important in order to understand the feedback and they need to know that you are taking those feedbacks seriously.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Yes. I think it is because the operational level, to be quite frank, is more important than me sitting in a ... I am quite happy to sit in a room and have the conversation and talk about what I want to do. I would be very pleased to because the Government Plan is published now and I have worked very hard behind the scenes to push for that money. I think we have been successful, and I am very pleased with that and the support of C.O.M. (Council of Ministers). We are happy to meet but I think the practicality of getting on and doing it, it has been very, very good, so that is great.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Just one supplementary about early years, Minister. You mentioned Plat Douet and d'Auvergne, I am intrigued by the trial that went on in Trinity, in the country, as it were, that one, how did that go?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Yes, I did not mention that, did I? Sorry. That was extending hours around the day, was it not? Very successful. I think that is one of the things that families want. This is where having a broad provision across helps because you can be flexible, you can ensure that people are getting what they want and there can be some flexibility in those hours. I have often said that schools can step in at times when there is need because they have that in-built flexibility, it is always going to be there and the nursery is going to be there. It is not like a private company, that has to either close or open, they perhaps need more stability in those terms and that is a lot easier to do.

The Connétable of Grouville:

I was very pleased that that was included in your trial because 2 urban schools, that is great but it would be lovely to see one out in the country, so that was a very good idea.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Yes, yes, absolutely and that is what we need to do. Because families are around the Island and I have got to say it is only a couple of miles into ... but we will not go into the discussion.

Deputy B.B. de S.DV.M. Porée:

Just some questions about smart phones, Minister.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Yes.

Deputy B.B. de S.DV.M. Porée:

Your announcement on 24th June about this ban on smart phones. Can you please advise the panel how the smart phone ban will be enforced consistently across all Government of Jersey schools and colleges?

[15:00]

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

First of all, as you know, I do not like the word ban. I think it is a negative connotation and we cannot ban phones because they still exist in our society. We can only control, first of all, what happens in our schools. The letter I sent earlier in the year basically ensured that there is consistency across all of our schools in terms of the policy. Before there were 2 schools, they were not the same and

now we have that consistency across. It has only been going for 2 weeks, we are 2 weeks into term. I cannot give you a huge amount of detail and data. Anecdotally, I am hearing that young people are getting used to it. I did hear a couple of times it was really nice young people are talking to each other and I thought that is a lovely thing to happen. That is anecdotal and we will see how it goes. In terms of how it is applied, schools are very clear as to what the policy is. We are very clear in what schools' policies are. If they are not being adhered to, I would like to know why. But I think they will be adhered to. I think it is helping teachers. But that is just one part of it. Go on, sorry.

Deputy B.B. de S.DV.M. Porée:

Will you be able to provide schools with additional guidance or resources to manage the enforcement and the new processes of the use of smart phones? Let us not call it a ban but within ...

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

It depends on what they are. I do not know what they need to do that, I think it is pretty clear.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

We did hear that some schools are just asking the children to keep phones in their bags and other schools ...

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Yes, and I think, yes ...

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

If I just finish.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Yes, sorry.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

... were putting them in the cupboards or lockers or something at the beginning and the end of the day. Is there consistency ...

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

The letter is really clear and I think whenever anything happens in our society people will find times when it perhaps is not entirely consistent. Smoking is banned in schools. Children probably still smoke. I would strongly advise them not to because it is a terrible, terrible habit but it still happens. There is clear guidance for schools. I wrote to parents and said: "If you want to send your child to school with a phone, please make sure it is put away in a locker during the day and it is not there."

I have not heard of situations in the first 2 weeks where that has not been adhered to. If a child does not put it in their locker, keeps it in their bag all day and it is not seen, then the outcome is the same. I am not saying that is what I wanted to happen. But I want to make it clear for schools and I want to make it simple so you did not have to police it during the day.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

It is much harder for a child, is it not, to resist not taking it out of the bag and ...

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

But this is exactly what we are trying to do in our schools.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Sorry, to interrupt your questioning, Deputy Porée.

Deputy B.B. de S.DV.M. Porée:

No, please, carry on.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

No, I just wanted to try and get to this point, if the schools are not doing something consistently, it might be a concern to parents. It has only been a matter of weeks. I would just ask, at some time will that be reviewed or checked to see how it is going?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Yes, yes.

Assistant Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

I think it is more about getting the message out there, which is clear and concise. It says that we want phones out of sight. How that is implemented is down to each school. Each school has their own autonomy to do that and they were already doing that beforehand. But I think we are sending the message from the department to say that we expect phones to be out of sight during the school day. How that is managed, again, is down to each school and their approach. We had some discussion around lockers, for example, when we were initially drafting the letter. If a school does feel that they need some extra resources or some support, then we would urge them to get in touch with us. But, ultimately, the schools have always got a level of autonomy; we cannot dictate to them.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

No, I know but I could not remember to be sure whether the guidance was that they should be locked away. I could not remember.

Assistant Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

No, it was brought to school.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

I can quote the letter.

Assistant Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Yes.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

"The parents are asked not to send a smart phone to school. If a phone is brought to school it must be switched off and put away. Breaches are handled through each school's behaviour policy." Each school has made that clear. I know there were assemblies at the beginning of the term in schools. Because on the other side of this there are some parents who do not like the idea of this. I have received very few emails with some concerns, which we have tried to deal with. I know you have got some concerns, which I am happy to deal with because they are clear as to what the schools will do. I think what we have got here is if we, as a society, say that no child will even own a phone, we have to decide how that is going to be policed in wider society. That is not just schools; that is outside of schools as well.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Our review will be published fairly soon but ...

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

But then it has to be very clear as to how that is going to be done and whether that is the right thing to do as well for our society in terms of any ban which may criminalise children.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

We are just asking about phones in schools at the moment.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Yes. But in schools there is clear guidance now. Can I just mention that the other stage of that starts tonight? Where there is a talk by Natasha Devon - I have said the name so many times, it went straight out of my head, I do apologise to her - is going to be talking about practicalities for parents in dealing with their children's mobile phones, online safety at home and now giving some guidance, saying these are the things you can do. It is very easy for me to say, right, do not do these things but I know it is difficult for a parent now with young people. You are navigating the

world, let us give that advice. We are also working with the N.S.P.C.C. (National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children) who are going into primary schools to do some work about online safety with all of our schools and I would like to publicly thank them for that. There is a whole programme of events going on. The other part of that which is, how do we support parents and children to understand why that decision was being made? Because if you give that a holistic approach to it, will have much, much more impact and that is the really key thing.

Deputy B.B. de S.DV.M. Porée:

Thank you. Are you having the same sort of conversations with private schools?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Yes.

Deputy B.B. de S.DV.M. Porée:

Okay, thank you, Minister.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Do you mean St. Michael's and St. George's?

Deputy B.B. de S.DV.M. Porée:

Yes.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Yes, I think they have that policy in place anyway, I am not sure. No. But I think they have a ...

Deputy B.B. de S.DV.M. Porée:

I think we have mainly been talking ...

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

I do not think they have necessarily the same issue.

Deputy B.B. de S.DV.M. Porée:

Okay, and that is one of the final questions because obviously the engagement with Government schools, it is obvious to know but is there any sort of engagement with private schools?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Yes. With the fee-paying schools it is the same.

Deputy B.B. de S.DV.M. Porée:

Fee-paying schools.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

In terms of private schools they are by definition private. They have their own policies. I think I used a law to say that it can be a school but they do make their own policies and they have the right to do that. It would be interesting perhaps if the panel contacted them and asked them because I think we would be ... I do not know whether I would step in now, to be quite frank. It is a good question but, thank you, we will have a look into that.

Deputy B.B. de S.DV.M. Porée:

Okay, thank you. Again, just carry on the last question on the smart phones, are there any exemptions presently in place for students with medical or specific educational needs who rely on smart phones for accessibility, for instance, in communication?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Yes. I think when I wrote the letter, I will be quite frank, I wrote it with 25 years of teaching experience. I know that if a child has diabetes and needs their phone to monitor their diabetes, the school will deal with that. The school will understand that. Their friends will understand that. Children are great at supporting each other. Schools are great at supporting. That is not an issue; these things are not going to be an issue. Schools are not going to stop anybody doing that. However, there are not massive numbers of young people who would have to be in that position. Therefore, I think it is absolutely manageable. If there is any issue that a school has, i.e. what do I do about this? Come and talk to us, talk to us centrally and we will go on what the school thinks is best for the child. I believe that schools would do the best for children and bend over backwards to make sure they are okay. Yes, there are exemptions, there are lots of medical conditions that might be affected by this and I would not want to go through them all because I am sure I will miss some out but diabetes was one. I do not know how many young people have the ... I do not know what those things are called.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Monitors, yes.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Yes. I do not know how many people do. I do not think it is massive numbers but I know they are growing.

Deputy B.B. de S.DV.M. Porée:

So very much these cases will be taken into consideration and ...

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Yes, yes, absolutely. What would happen in a school, particularly in a primary school, they would have a great link for that child with the office and with a member of staff. In a secondary school you would have the same. It is that managing your own condition as you grow up as well and people would be growing into how to do that. Anything regards hearing apps, et cetera, yes, absolutely that is not what this limitation is about. It is about social media and protecting their children and trying to - to use a footballing term - have our foot on the ball. Just look around a little bit and think, okay, what is the best pathway forward now? Because this has been thrown at us as a society. This is just one part of that. Why does society need to be there?

Deputy B.B. de S.DV.M. Porée:

Just out of curiosity you did say you do not like the word "ban".

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Yes.

Deputy B.B. de S.DV.M. Porée:

How would you describe it?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

I will tell you why because when I was 15, if you had told me I had a ban from anything, the first thing I would have done is go and find that thing that I was banned from. I look round this room and I am not entirely sure how different that would be for anyone.

Deputy B.B. de S.DV.M. Porée:

I am the same.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Deputy Curtis, you would have been very different I am sure.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

I am. I am not going to talk about when I was a teenager.

Deputy B.B. de S.DV.M. Porée:

I would be the same.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

I just think because we need to have a dialogue with our young people. We have been into schools recently talking to every single school about post-16 and I have to say every single one of those visits was genuinely uplifting because it gives you a bit of faith in young people on the way forward. Have the dialogue, talk about it. Do not say, right, it is just banned, that is it. That is why I do not use the word. It is me being a bit about semantics, I know that but that is okay. I will say as well this is a whole society thing. For example, I sometimes look at I.T.V. (Independent Television) playback, yes, to watch again and I did know that when there was a lot of stuff about mobile phones, one of the first things you had to do if you wanted to watch it again is watch a very detailed advert about a mobile phone and how fantastic it was. We have all got a part to play. The media, we were talking to a business about what they can do, a really good conversation with the Institute of Directors, I thank them for that, schools, N.S.P.C.C. As an Island we have got an opportunity here.

Deputy B.B. de S.DV.M. Porée:

Thank you, Minister.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Okay, right, so, Helen.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

Thank you. I have got some questions about the educational psychology service.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Yes.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

At the last quarterly hearing we were advised that the recruitment process was underway, that there would be sufficient capacity at the start of this academic year. We did have a private briefing this morning, which I have to say was very helpful. Would you like to tell us what plans you have for the educational psychology service moving forward and how we can reassure children, parents and families that progress is being made?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Yes. First of all, I absolutely acknowledge the problems that have existed. They did not arise overnight, they arose over some time. We believe that there is a very positive way forward with those now, from the work of officers, with the work at C.Y.P.E.S. themselves, for that communication between everybody involved. There are expected to be some vacancies that will be covered temporarily by locum educational psychologists. But we are very hopeful that we can recruit. I do

see a solution to the problems in the very near future, which I think will be very positive and we can put that service back on to a really good footing. I thank all of the people who worked there because they have also, I think, at times some unfair public criticism and ill-informed public criticism. But also I understand the concerns that parents have had and we want to address those concerns and we are addressing those concerns. You had the briefing this morning, you know that there are particular things happening, which I do not really want to discuss in public, because let us get things in place first. It has been a very challenging situation at times but we are moving forward. Partly as well I have got to say from the work of officers, which has been very good. I think the service will move forward and we have the opportunity to learn from what has gone before, build for the future and make sure it works into the future.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

Okay, thank you. Could you just tell us how the overall effectiveness of the educational psychology service is going to be monitored?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

I think we will have a person ... do you want to ...

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

Absolutely. There is a lead-in position now, who is being supported by a principal educational psychology professional for oversight. They have already managed to determine the outstanding caseload, which if you will accept as a very good estimate, is 39 live cases at the moment, of which 30 have been allocated to the existing educational psychologist's team for completion by end of September; 9 further cases either have a record or need associated, so are live but are not the same level of urgency. Some are to be considered in the imminent school prioritisation meetings that are happening at the end of this month into October. Once those meetings have been held and that is with all schools over a case of 4 days, then we will just pause, look at that new stock, if you like, of cases, allocate educational psychologists to those priority cases and that becomes a September term's activity. That will then be subject to quite robust weekly management, as you would expect, in terms of numbers of cases, contacts, progress, completion and so on.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

Okay. How are you feeding back the feedback from students and parents and teachers into this new model that you are going to be operating?

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

So far a lot of the parental feedback has come as a consequence of the review that was carried out. So quite extensive work with parents, I think this includes the parent carer forum, either by this work

or by associated work, be that special educational needs provisions. But in terms of the future we are working very much with school leadership, so we will ask school leadership - S.E.N.C.O.s (Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator) and others - to assert the voice of children and families as part of those school meetings.

[15:15]

Deputy H.M. Miles:

Okay, thank you. I think my last question on this really is for the Minister. Do you have confidence that when we see you at the next quarterly meeting that things with the educational psychology service will be back on track?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Yes, I am confident we are going on track now. Obviously it depends when the next quarterly hearing is because if in a week's time I give you the same answer ... but, yes, I really do see us moving forward. I mean, look, whenever you try to recruit I want us to recruit the right people if we are recruiting. If it comes back to me and they say: "We recruited, they were not the right people, we are going to carry on" I will accept that and I will tell you that. I will say: "We want the best possible quality for Jersey." We have got to get that right. I hope we will do that, and also I think that as we look forward we ... sometimes things do not go the way you want them to, they are not as good as you want them to be. It does not mean that people are not working hard and it does not mean people are not valued, but we have to look at that and we have to move forward. I believe that is exactly what we have done so we should be moving forward. So, yes, I really hope we can and if we have not I will tell you why.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

Thank you.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

I have got some questions now about support for neurodivergent students. Minister, across both primary and secondary settings do you consider that there are sufficient provisions in place to support neurodivergent students; those with autism, A.D.H.D. (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder), dyslexia and other neurological conditions?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Yes, there is a very wide range of experiences there. Are they adequate? As Minister for Education I am never going to say that the provision we have got is adequate because I always want more. That is an official position on my part and I think my Deputy agrees with me, and we have to have

that battle. There are 2 things here; there is an enormous amount of successful work that goes on every single day in every single school. Our young people are not en masse going to school and not being supported. There will be individual cases, there will be cases where that is more challenging and it has not worked as well. When they arise we have to interact as a department and we have to work as hard as we can to try and improve that. We have got a lot more T.A.s (teaching assistant). Perhaps I can shoehorn in a point here; there was a report on Saturday - a very poorly written article - an opinion piece that talked about the increasing numbers in education. Those are the frontline services that are supporting our children so, yes, there are an increase. Good; that is what we wanted. The 199 increase in T.A.s is exactly what we wanted in our schools. They are being trained, every T.A. is sent to have introductory Autism Education Trust training, for example. We are trying to increase the skills now and get them into schools and with the changes that we are starting to look at in the structure of the department, the resources are being centred directly into schools. We do not want any resources centrally left; we want them in schools working every day because that is where the impact is, and people want to do the same thing. So will there be gaps? Of course there will, particularly within a changing environment of S.E.N. (Special Educational Needs) or neurodivergence, because we are all learning as a society what that means, and that will always adapt.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

So would you say that there is work going on to look at how that can be improved?

Assistant Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

We are developing what is called an inclusive practice guidance, which is to help schools develop a common language, promote collaboration between the schools, and support the development of more inclusive classrooms. That will offer practical support for teachers to support them in adapting the provision to meet the needs of all the students. I think it is also important to add that every school now has a trained special educational needs co-ordinator.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Sorry, I was going to say ... you have said exactly ... go on, carry on.

Assistant Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

I think that the Minister mentioned the Autism Education Trust professional development programme is offered by a team of trainers to all schools as well. So there is various training modules available which are often bespoke to the level of need as well. The Minister mentioned T.A.s, but also all the Jersey trainee teachers as well will be given that, so there is quite a lot going on in that area.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

You used the word “collaboration” and this is really key in this. The more we get our schools to collaborate and work together in groups ... I do not believe that competition between schools improves education. I believe that working together and collaborating does. So if a school is working well and all of our schools are open, and they say: “Well, they are working well” it is not a question of: “They are working well, why do we ...” it is: “How does that work for you? How can we share that good practice? How can we work together?” It is not a stick to beat anyone with if you are not doing it the way we want to, it is about where is the carrot to say: “Where can we improve that?” That is the sort of culture that we need to develop as well around our neurodivergence, because when you are working with people - as Education is - it is never always going to be perfect, but you cannot be hiding when it is not perfect. Good professionals will say: “I am not getting this right I do not think, what can I do that is different?” That is the culture we want to develop in there and that is a really important thing in that space, I think.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Thank you. I think you mentioned as well about the teachers receiving training in neuroinclusive practices; is that for all teachers?

Assistant Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

That is the Jersey trainee teachers and all the T.A.s that are essentially recruited. They have an introductory Autism Education Trust module, but obviously these things will be offered to all teachers as well. Obviously they are being recruited and trained centrally so we can make sure that they get that.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

You mentioned about some bespoke plans, so do the children get a tailored learning plan specifically for their needs?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

They have a record of need, yes, absolutely. Also if it identified a particular S.E.N. need ... I mean, as a teacher in a classroom you would adapt accordingly, and those adaptations ... I think this is the thing that needs to be understood about teaching; it is not often massive adaptations, you do not need to write reams and reams, it is just subtle differences in the way you deliver, the way that work is produced, for example, because you understand that child and you form a relationship with them as you teach them over time. So this is not a simple thing to do. Could I just shoehorn in one other thing, sorry to do this again. The other part of the Government Plan I am very pleased with is for the first time ever there is actual real money towards teachers’ terms and conditions and time available for teachers. Now, if we want to train, if we want to upskill, if we want to look at the profession and say: “What do you need?” you have to try and make some time. Now, I would want

a lot more money, of course I would. Again, as Minister for Education I always want to argue for more money, but we can start to do that now. On Thursday we have a conference with the unions that were arranged, because we have a good relationship there, and we can start to look forwards at how we can use that time effectively.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

That is really good but we have not even got halfway through so we had better just focus on this at the moment.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Sorry, I have got a lot to say.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

We had heard from some schools that a decision is made not to provide funding for teaching assistants in primary schools if the school is operating in deficit, is that the case?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

No.

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

We do not have a blanket decision on that at all.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

So that does not happen then, so if a school is in deficit and they say they need some more teaching assistants, they will not have any difficulty in ...

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

Do you want me to answer?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

I think that would be good if you did.

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

So if a school is in deficit we will have discussions with that school about how we bring them into a balanced budget position, so there will be different solutions for different schools. But we have to obviously recognise the context of the school and we have to recognise the need within a school as well. So it will be different in different circumstances for different schools based on the fiscal position that they are in at that time.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Okay, so can you say for definite that a school would not be refused their need for extra assistance if they are operating at a deficit?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Can I just answer this? I think there will be a context to this. I think, as Keith has said, that we need to understand the context of that overspend. If the overspend is due to the school not managing their budget correctly and making decisions, which means that they have decided on something else rather than a teaching assistant that is not appropriate, I think it is the duty of the chief officer to challenge that. So that might be where this information is coming from, that challenge. But I think schools have to make priorities and if the priority is one to one direct support in the classroom then I would say prioritise that. If that priority has been made and everything is there and we are genuinely at a point where nothing else could have been done, then let us look at that, because a teaching assistant over a year is not a hugely expensive thing, given that budgets are millions of pounds in schools. So I think we need to look at that context really specifically rather than it being a blanket thing.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Okay, because we know that there has been a lot more demand around S.E.N. needs, so is there the right guidance provided to schools facing financial constraints on how to manage adequate support staffing?

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

This is a very active piece of our work at the moment. You will have seen reported in the media about some of the financial challenges that some schools are facing, so for schools with quite a significant challenge we have support boards in place where officers from the department and the leadership of schools are working together to find solutions to their current context. Part of that is around staffing structures; part of it is around non-staffing structures. So we are absolutely focused on trying to bring schools back into a balanced budget, but we also recognise that need is rising and we have got to make sure that we put resources in the right place. It is a major focus for us this year in terms of developing the building blocks for doing this, and I think as we move into 2026 we will start seeing some chances and hopefully the movement of resources to where the need is at its greatest.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Okay, thank you. I just had a couple of questions about A.R.F.I.D. (Avoidant Restrictive Food Intake Disorder) which I think has often been misdiagnosed in the past, it seems. Minister, can you outline the current provisions in place to support students with A.R.F.I.D. in schools?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

It is C.A.M.H.S. (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service) and Health that advise schools on that, and it is bespoke individual health plans for the individuals involved, I believe. I think that is the only way really to do it because it is a very individual thing. So I would imagine any young person experiencing that would have a link to C.A.M.H.S. and Health and then they would have a link to the school in terms of the best way forward. That is where we are with that.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Okay. Is there any specific training available for school staff to help them identify and support children with A.R.F.I.D. ...

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Not that I know of. Rachel?

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

... because we did hear about some training?

Head of School Improvement Advisory Service:

It would be always through the advice of C.A.M.H.S., so C.A.M.H.S. would give the guidance and then that would go directly to the schools. We would not expect ... I mean, a S.E.N.C.O. may have a good working knowledge of A.R.F.I.D. but the S.E.N.C.O. may not be the person working with that young person directly, so anybody working needs to know about ... whether that is at snack, lunch, before school, being aware of warning signs if they were struggling with food intake, and then struggling with tiredness as a result, for example. But that advice would come from C.A.M.H.S. through their health plan.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Okay, thank you. So I have a few more questions but they are around the Switch programme. Minister, are there safeguarding protocols and what safeguarding protocols are in place within the Switch programme to ensure the safety and well-being of the students?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Well, the Switch programme - as with any pathway at La Passerelle, and that is what it is linked to - follows the same safeguarding protocols as all Island schools. Safeguarding is integral to everything

we do and it is the number one provision within the advisory service and our school review process, so it would be the same. The detail of those is in the Keeping Children Safe in Education document that is available, we can send you a copy of that or a link to it at least, which I think would be useful for you. At La Passerelle a number of staff are qualified as a designated safeguard lead, so they probably have a higher concentration, if I can use that phrase, of people trained in safeguarding because of the nature of the school as well. So there are lots of safeguarding leads there. That is all I can say really.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

I think some of these concerns have come about from hearing from parents who have children who are neurodivergent and then in school with some children who have complex social, emotional and mental health needs, and sometimes that mix has been a concern.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Yes, I think with those concerns I would really encourage those parents to contact us and let us have that dialogue. I do not think a hearing is the place to discuss specific examples, but I want to be very open to those concerns because we want that to work well. I mean, Switch only opened on 2nd June 2025 so it is early on. The review period is 6 months but I think assessing outcomes in the Switch project will be ongoing because of its very nature, so any feedback on that I think will be much appreciated. We would want to absolutely engage.

[15:30]

There are real challenges there and we are trying to do what we can to be adaptive to those. There have been 27 referrals to date so it is a relatively small number, but significant for every single child involved.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Is it still operating as a pilot or is it going to be a permanent feature?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

We are in the pilot and that is a very good question. I have always said that if a pilot does not work we stop doing it. I think sometimes we take on pilots and we are a bit afraid to stop if they are not working. We are not going to take that line. I would rather sit here and you say: "Why did it not work?" and I will give you the reasons why it did not work, than continue with something that does not work.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Do you know when it might be reviewed?

Assistant Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Six months ...

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

It is a 6 month period so June, July, August, September, November, December, January, but I think we will have an ongoing review. If there were serious ...

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

Absolutely, it is 6 months, as Deputy Alves said ...

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Maximum.

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

... but we are looking at outcomes now and how the service or the provision is working in the context of La Passerelle and also in our wider offer. So throughout this term we will be looking at how it is performing and how it is successful, and whether it is successful.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

I have to say as well, the referrals are from primary school at the moment I believe; it would be a lot easier for us if we had the La Passerelle Primary built and it had not been delayed, and that was agreed 4 years ago. It is a trigger for me, if I am honest. I just want to put that in context as well.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Okay, so just a couple more questions about the Switch programme. How does it co-ordinate with the educational psychologist and C.A.M.H.S. in its workings?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Co-ordinate, I mean, they would be an integral part of any assessment ...

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

Rachel probably could talk about the pathway.

Head of School Improvement Advisory Service:

So the first application for a place in the Switch is through direct contact to the school, but what we have moved to this September is that we have a S.E.N. panel who meet regularly and all applications

for changing pathways across the whole educational estate go through that S.E.N. panel. So that S.E.N. panel would have educational psychologists, S.E.N.C.O.s, representation from home school, representation from any school that was going to receive a young person, and will co-ordinate, making sure that all the needs of that young person are understood, from the wide range of professionals who are involved, and that the parental voice is clearly heard. So it is a combined application. No application to the Switch would take place without consultation and agreement from the parents that the application was made, and we would work together in concert with those professionals and with the families.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Yes.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Do the panel also meet to do like a case review of how things are going?

Head of School Improvement Advisory Service:

So the S.E.N. panel meet weekly. Any review would usually work through the run cycle; the vast majority of young people who are in La Passerelle or who are in Mont à l'Abbé will have a record of need. There will be a small number who will go through a different pathway, maybe through a considerable challenge through attendance for example, so a young person who had not been attending school may then be referred, but quite often will find that there is a need that we need to identify. It is a combined pathway.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Can I just say as well, Chair, that I am very pleased you have asked that because the fact that there is a panel of people making decisions is a really difficult thing to do. It is not one individual, it is not just based upon a whim; there is some real evidence and there is a lot of collaborative working going on to try and make the right decision for really challenging circumstances at times. We have to have that context.

Head of School Improvement Advisory Service:

Of the children who were referred last term, some of them have returned to their mainstream settings, some have stayed in La Passerelle, and that will have been managed through the S.E.N. panel, that decision making, through parental discussion but also through professional views on where they were in terms of their progress, the objectives they had when they made that transition and whether it was appropriate to stay or whether they should have a different setting.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Just to say, we have to be brave as a department to make decisions to try and intervene so that things do not just continue if they are not working. Switch is an attempt to do that and we will review whether it works and we are all trying to do the very best with it that we can.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

My last question on this is currently there are children who are there now; how they are supported in reintegration into mainstream school settings?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

As part of the development and success of that would be an identification of the possibility of that and how that would work, and that person from the mainstream school who is linked to that child's teacher or the person linked to that school would be involved in that panel review as you go on. The aim would be to get every child back to school as best we possibly can but it has got to be the right environment for the young people to move forward, particularly at young ages.

The Connétable of Grouville:

I am very proud to ask the questions on Jersey Music Manifesto and service in the Island. Minister, could you outline the Government of Jersey's current policy on music education in schools, and how it aligns with the Music Manifesto which was published in May 2024?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

I was going to be flippant and say what key would you like it in, but I do not know what I am talking about.

The Connétable of Grouville:

I am only a singer, Minister.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Choose a key, any key. Yes, music education delivered by school is funded in the same way as the rest of the curriculum, so as part of the school funding formula there is money as per the published calculations for Jersey, i.e. music teachers would be funded in the same way as other teachers who are in schools. The delivery of music as a curriculum subject in schools is delivered by music teachers within the school as part of their usual allocation. In addition to that the Jersey Music Service - and this is a word I have now got to get right - provides peripatetic lessons both in school and in other venues. At the moment there is a revenue budget of £1.26 million for the Jersey Music Service, so there is a significant amount of money put into that. They have been through some changes in premises; they are in the old Highlands education building, so they have got a position

which is now more stable to be in. That is the way we deliver it, through formal funding and the Jersey Music Service.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Is it considered a core part of the curriculum across all key stages?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Core subjects: English, maths ... is science still core? It should be. English, maths, sciences, yes, in terms of primary school, yes, I think music is a core part of the curriculum. Do you want to talk about ...

Head of School Improvement Advisory Service:

It is a foundation subject which means outside English, maths and science you have the foundation subjects which remain compulsory to the end of key stage 3, and when a young person is 13 or 14 when they take their options it will be one of the options that might take as one of their 10 from the suite of in excess of 25 G.C.S.E.s (General Certificate of Secondary Education) that young people will be selecting across the Island.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

That is a concise answer. Better than the one I was searching for inside my head.

The Connétable of Grouville:

What level of funding is currently allocated to music education in Jersey schools, and how is it distributed across schools and programmes? I know you have just intimated the cost of the Music Service.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Yes, and I think it is very difficult for me to give you a figure for each school, it would be almost impossible.

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

I am not sure, because it is within the funding formula, whether we can strip something out and have a look, but within the funding formula it does allocate money then to each school.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

But currently I would say I believe there are no music teacher vacancies?

Head of School Improvement Advisory Service:

No.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

So they are staffed. All graduate music teachers are offered the opportunity to gain Jersey qualified teacher status and in 2023 to 2024 5 teachers were supported, from very different backgrounds, some incredibly talented musicians, one in particular that I know, a remarkable musician who is now teaching. Music teaching is a very different discipline, I think. I know teaching has got similarities, but there has to be that underlying specific talent around music as well. A wonderful thing.

The Connétable of Grouville:

One of my questions worth pointing out is how do you ensure that there is an equitable access to music education for all students, regardless of background or ability?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Yes, that is a challenge. I think the base teaching within the schools we can ensure in terms of our funding of schools. The Jersey Music Service works towards that. However, if parents can pay and do pay for many lessons there will be that inbuilt inequality because music lessons can be expensive. It takes an enormous input and an enormous amount of practice to do that and there are many, many private music tutors on the Island that I know are quite busy, let us put it that way.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Are there any specific initiatives targeting underserved communities?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

There is curriculum based lessons delivered by class teachers, there is access to group and individual instrument tuition, that is through J.M.S. (Jersey Music Service) but also I think through schools as well, and schools have been using other groups to do that as well. The choir and ensemble provision through the Jersey Music Service still happens, they still had their concert, I went this year and it is always lovely. My children were in it years ago, I was quite a proud dad. Whole class instrumental tuition happens as well. There are secondary music projects that happen. There is access to free after school ensemble and choir provision for all children across the Island. I think whether we can say there is an inequality and who takes that up; I mean, stereotypically there might be, but it may well be that children are interested in other things, sport, dance, all sorts of things that happen, and they are also very valid in terms of what young people do. Music is not for everybody.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Thank you for your honesty, Minister. You have already explained to us that there are currently no vacancies or shortages in specialist music teaching roles, so we are fully staffed in that role, thank you very much. Is the Jersey graduate teacher training programme open to music teacher roles?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Yes, it is.

Head of School Improvement Advisory Service:

Two years ago we had 5 graduates with different music disciplines who qualified as Jersey qualified teachers, and any music graduate who wished to apply to be a music teacher can apply annually to the J.G.T.T.P. (Jersey Graduate Teacher Training Programme) and do a P.G.C.E (Post Graduate Certificate in Education) in music.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

I think what we have to say is it does not necessarily guarantee a job; it guarantees that you are qualified to teach. We are a limited Island and we would be in quite a strange, very good, catch-22 position if we were fully staffed and had all of the skilled teachers that we wanted across everything that we ever wanted, and were training teachers, and then we got criticism to say: "But you are training teachers and they cannot find a job here." It is a challenge, we are not there yet but that distinction is quite important, I think.

The Connétable of Grouville:

If it is any hint at all we have got a major shortage of trombone players. Anyway; another story. I am going to move on now, Minister, to a serious problem - vaping in schools - if I may. Minister, could you inform the panel of what support is currently available to schools in Jersey to address vaping among students, including prevention, education and intervention?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

In terms of support in schools, I mean, they are not allowed in schools. I think the single use vaping ban is very useful for us. That is as a society-wide thing that I think is a very simple thing to do, although let us see how that pans out in terms of the way that is got around because inevitably it will be. I think that sends a really clear message to young people that we do not want you to vape; it is not a good thing to do.

The Connétable of Grouville:

But do you have guidelines and toolkits that you provide to schools?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Yes, we do.

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

Yes, within policies within schools, also within campaigns that have been run by Public Health in partnership with our department in terms of the messaging around vaping.

Assistant Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

The parent toolkit as well.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Is there any reporting with regards to incidents of vaping?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Sorry, I missed completely, a cocreated vaping campaign for children and young people was launched by Health in July 2025, and there was a letter sent to all parents about it. In terms of the reporting of it, it would come under the normal discipline reporting and behaviour logs. I do not know if there has been a massive increase, decrease; I do not think there has been. Children are children, they are not all perfect. We might catch children vaping but the message is very clear; it is not allowed in schools, we do not want you to do it. They will be confiscated, parents will be called in, there is discussions we will be having.

Assistant Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

There is work going on with the P.S.H.E. (Personal, Social, Health Education) leads as well with C.Y.P.E.S. providing some central resources for schools, but that is not obviously defining any policies, it is just keeping it flexible for schools to approach the issue in the way that works best for those students. There is also some development of the digital quit resources which Keith mentioned, which Public Health are working on.

[15:45]

The Connétable of Grouville:

I was going to ask about the Public Health links, if there were any access to those.

Assistant Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Yes, so it is a digital tool to support and empower children and young people, tailored to their vaping habits, whatever that might mean.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Okay, because the panel are obviously very aware of the addiction of nicotine which is considered by many to be worse than some category A drugs, so we are conscious of the effects that may have.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

I think there are other side effects of vapes that will come with time, which we are not recognising at the moment, and that does concern me.

The Connétable of Grouville:

I think that is all on that subject.

Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée:

So it is my turn and I will be asking some questions around C.Y.P.E.S. and its advisory board. Minister, have you considered establishing an independent advisory board for the Children, Young People, Education and Skills Department in order to provide strategic oversight and expert input, say for instance similar to the Health Advisory Board?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

The short answer is no, but the longer short answer is no because there are specific reasons for that. The health board is set up because you have to remember that a very significant proportion of the health services provided are via the private sector, and not, if you like, directly through Government, i.e. G.P.s (general practitioners) and a number of other services; so that health board is a very distinct overview there. I would say that the work we are doing with our schools overview is on the governance and governing bodies in schools, and there is an enormous amount of work going on there. So those governing bodies are more skilled, they are more directed and their importance is emphasised to them. But in terms of the overview and the direction of education, I think that is our job, I think it is the chief officer's job and the other officers there, in conjunction with the profession itself. I do not see any need for a board like that. I understand the health board, I was supportive of the health board and I will continue to be supportive of the health board, but I think there is a distinct difference between the 2. However, the principles of that oversight governance I think already exist through our governing bodies. That can improve and we have done a lot of work recently, in fact there is some significant training going on soon, there is a conference with governing bodies, we had meetings with them, there has been challenge and it has been really good challenge. A scheme of delegation is produced about what the governing bodies are about - perhaps we need to brief you on that, at some point we will do - and that has had some challenge in terms of its content. It is exactly what we want; the involvement of governing bodies and the role that they have. So that is where I would stand on that.

Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée:

I think the panel would be very grateful to hear further down the line what is taking place.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Yes, I have that said, we have been somewhat involved in other things in the last few weeks.

Assistant Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Just to mention as well, we have also seconded some head teachers, so I think we have had 4 over a period of some time now, which also feeds into shaping our policies.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

That direct link with schools and people who have been there with C.Y.P.E.S. and our workforce has to be developed, because that is where we are going to really get the impact. Those are the people delivering day in and day out and we are lucky; we have a workforce of professionals, massively dedicated people with postgraduate qualifications. It is not a bad workforce to have.

Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée:

I think my other question maybe Deputy Alves has already mentioned in the recruitment of head teachers, can I just ask what structures exist within C.Y.P.E.S. to review the effectiveness of education, youth and children services policy, and how are these reviews informed by independent or cross sector perspectives?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Yes, well I can talk about education. We have the School Improvement Advisory Service and we have the school review system ... notice I am not using the word “inspection” because we are talking about a school review. That has to be a collaborative process with the school with clear guidance as to what it means with constructive outcomes. It is interesting, I think that other jurisdictions are very interested in what we are doing now. We do not have the Ofsted rating system. I do not believe that is the right thing to do; you cannot sum up a school with one number. I think it is an outrageous thing to do personally but I will stop talking about that. So we have that system in place. Keith, do you want to talk about some of the things that we do to oversight and the changes that you have made?

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

Yes, so there will be specific areas that we will need to be looking at as well, so the Jersey school review framework gives us an overall view of performance of schools and then collectively we can look at elements of the delivery of education across the system. But there might be other areas that we want to be more targeted and focused on; we have obviously spoken about the educational psychology service earlier, we might want to look more widely at the inclusion service, and we have

spoken about finance as well. So we have opportunities to engage with professionals with expertise in this space, but also - and I think more interestingly for the context of working in Jersey and being closer to the workforce - is that engagement with head teachers, and we will widen that to other staff as well. So bringing in their experience of how the system impacts on them and working with them to help shape future policy to recommend to the Minister is absolutely a model which we are starting to see some success of. So understanding how things operate on the frontline, because essentially that is what the Minister's policies drive, to make improvements there. So to hear that feedback from the frontline is really, really important. Setting up structures within the department to enable that to happen I think is a positive step forward for us, as well as relying on those other independent reports, support and intelligence from other places.

Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée:

Thank you. In terms of other advisory boards that have improved their services and outcomes as well as accountabilities, what other jurisdictions have you looked into, to learn from?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

In terms of the school advisory service and our review system we have looked at other jurisdictions and what they have done, and I think one ...

Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée:

Can you mention any?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Well, we would look at the U.K. and say: "Do not do it that way" for example. I think that is really important. There are some elements ... sorry, do you want to ...

Head of School Improvement Advisory Service:

When the Jersey school review was in its first iteration - and in its latest update - we have looked widely at best practice across Europe and across the U.K. We dipped into sections of the Welsh practice, Scottish practice, we looked at practice across international school assessment and we reviewed and updated in those lines. Ultimately Jersey is tied to the English system because our examinations lead to qualifications on that pathway; 95 per cent of our young people in different settings will take G.C.S.E.s or level 2 qualifications examined by English exam boards, ditto at level 3 or A level, B.T.E.C. (Business and Technology Education Council), level 3, et cetera. With that the case you have to make sure that your curriculum and your assessment of school standards around curriculum is tied into that system. So areas of the Welsh curriculum and Irish curriculum would be relevant to us; other areas, not so much. We are in a very privileged position here. We

are able to say what is working, where are the bugbears in that system, how can we avoid the bugbear? For example, the grading, we made a very clear choice about that for Jersey.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Yes, and I go back to this conference on Thursday, I think that is part of that element of bringing together other jurisdictions from not just our Islands but from Ireland and from other places to say: "This is the first time we have done this, look, this is what we are doing, this is where we want to go. Where are you? What is good? What is bad?" Looking wider and then I suppose the phrase is cherry picking the things that we want to do, and then implementing them is the way forward with that. I think it is a good thing for us to do and it means the choices we make are very important, particularly around long-term funding with decreasing numbers. Keep the funding: numbers decrease, we can do more with that funding. I think that is quite important.

Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée:

Would you say that there are lessons that can be drawn from the Health Advisory Board now? You obviously decided that was not something you would like to follow.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

I think we already have, if you like, layers of oversight, and particularly with our governing bodies. I think what we have learnt, if there is anything to learn, is let us make sure that the things we have are working well. I think Health is a much larger beast as well in terms of what it does.

Assistant Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

We have also got things like the Curriculum Council, for example, that meet regularly and look at things that can be changed.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Yes, you are right, and they are very specific around the areas of the curriculum. We have a religious education advisory council who look specifically around that, we have ...

Assistant Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

It is a range of staff from all the schools on the Island as well.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Yes, so I think another layer is just simply unnecessary, but what we have to do is use the things that we have got now effectively and well, and that is what we want to do. I think that is where we are heading, personally.

Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée:

Thank you, Minister.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

I have got some questions about Jèrriais in schools, please. Jèrriais lessons are offered in States primary schools and in some private secondary schools, and certainly as we have been going around visiting primary schools we have had some really lovely feedback about Jèrriais. I was at the Eisteddfod as well in St. Ouen, so coming on well. But we know that the current Jèrriais language strategy is set to expire at the end of this year, so can you confirm to us, Minister, what the plans are to renew or replace the strategy?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Yes, that is being worked on now by the department. I think it is an opportunity for us to make a clear, if you like, delegation of responsibility in terms of the teaching of a language, what are the heritage parts, what is the most effective use of those different departments, both in terms of Economic Development who deal with that and ourselves. We have had some good conversations about that recently, and as we move forward I think part of the strategy will be that clear delegation. The teachers that we have - it is not easy to find teachers, it is a very specialist thing, part of that is training teachers as they go as well and improving the language. We want to focus on that language delivery and teaching within schools first and foremost personally, and I think the new strategy will need to reflect that.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

Will the new strategy include targets then for kind of learner engagement, teacher recruitment, succession planning?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Yes, it will have to, but they have to be meaningful targets. It is difficult around a language I think, particularly a language like Jèrriais which perhaps is not massively widely spoken elsewhere, but I think ...

Deputy H.M. Miles:

Well, it is not spoken elsewhere at all; it is our heritage language.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

I was trying to be positive there and say that does not ...

The Connétable of Grouville:

Similar to Norman.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Yes, but it does not mean that it is not ...

The Connétable of Grouville:

Not the same.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Yes, exactly. But I think, yes, those targets have to be there but they have to be meaningful targets, they have to be ones that are understood, and they have to be ones that ... with any target in education there is a balance between just teaching for that target or teaching well and effectively and the target is met anyway. I think that is what I would like to see.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

In terms of recruiting new teachers and succession planning, what is your plan around that? Because obviously if you have anybody leave you cannot just go and get another one.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

That is a challenge. That is a real challenge.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

It is, so how are you addressing that challenge in terms of over recruitment, for example?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Yes, at the moment people are developing their language as they are involved with the department. We have 2 people, I believe, doing that, so there is succession planning on a small - but it will always be small - scale. We have to try and attract people who are Jèrriais speakers and find them from somewhere, getting young people involved, for example, as we go forward. It is going to be a challenge which I cannot say I have a simple solution to.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

Is the Jèrriais teaching open to the graduate teacher scheme, if you brought in language graduates?

Head of School Improvement Advisory Service:

It would not work just at the moment. I think the thing to say about the Jèrriais teaching team is we recruited teachers ... so we chose when we made the recruitment for Jèrriais a number of years ago now to recruit qualified teachers who had good skills to give access to young people. The majority

of those were not Jèrriais speakers, so they have learnt their Jèrriais while also delivering the Alentou culture and history programme. They have really impressively developed their language skill, so a number of those colleagues who started as complete novices in Jèrriais are now at a level of fluency where they would feel comfortable and confident to teach adult learners Jèrriais as an evening class, for example. So we have got teachers who have developed that skill and who could then teach other new arrivals. That was the first step. There is a level of sustainability now that we did not have in terms that the age and stage of those teachers means that we have got time for those colleagues to continue to develop with existing Jèrriais speakers, but they are already now at a level where they could teach new arrivals to the programme. That would be the first step. The normal route towards qualified teacher status I think would go ... at the moment you would hope to recruit qualified teachers who would learn Jèrriais rather than take on novice speakers of Jèrriais and then train them to be a teacher. Because as a graduate profession we tend to have a degree in the subject that we are going to teach. As yet we do not have a qualified route at G.C.S.E. or A level for Jèrriais.

[16:00]

Deputy H.M. Miles:

Is there any progress towards that, because certainly in the ...

Head of School Improvement Advisory Service:

The team are working on that.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

... 2022 to 2025 strategy it was very clear that part of that was to develop a G.C.S.E. in Jèrriais.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

It is really difficult.

Head of School Improvement Advisory Service:

I think one of the challenges with that is gaining that fluency level among the staff. We did not know how long it would take. As I said, people have made really positive progress. We are now in a position to take that next step and start talking about curriculum development, to talk about qualification and ratification pathways, in a way that we may not have been at the beginning.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

Okay, so those next steps will be clearly articulated in the new strategy, which will be 2026 to 2029, presumably?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Yes, it will have to be, and it may remain that one of the goals is to try and produce a qualification - it does not necessarily have to be a G.C.S.E., qualifications change - and that is always going to be the challenge. But I think this is a classic example of being able to speak a language does not necessarily mean you can teach it. Teaching is a craft, and combining those 2 - particularly with a language like Jèrriais - is going to be a challenge. I think the work that has been done so far has enabled a future where perhaps there would not have been one, to be quite frank, and I think we have to be honest about that. So now we can make some steps going forward, which is good. We have to find those speakers who want to teach it as well. If you know any, let us know.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

You have obviously just published the budget but is the budget for Jèrriais maintained for next year to make sure that you can develop the next strategy and deliver the next strategy?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

I believe it is. Where it ...

Deputy H.M. Miles:

Has there been a reduction in the budget?

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

There has been no reduction in the budget.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

There has been no reduction.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

No reduction in the budget around Jèrriais.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

I think we need to look at where that budget is in terms of what it is delivering. We are interested in the teaching of it. Some of it goes towards some heritage things, but that is a conversation we are having, a good, constructive conversation, because that leads to better use of that money, and where it fits in, in that wider application of the elements of a language. It is very unique ...

Deputy H.M. Miles:

Of course it is.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

... and a real challenge.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

But it is our Jersey heritage language, is it not?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Yes, exactly.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

You have got people like me who will be asking you these questions all the time.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

What we want to do is exactly that. We need to be realistic about what we can do but we also need to be ...

Deputy H.M. Miles:

We also need to be ambitious about what we can do.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Yes, but ambition without any form of realism could be disastrous for our language. We could say we are going to have 5 qualifications that are just not possible and that means that we constantly fail. What we have done so far is by building up that bank of knowledge, building up that bank of skills, there is a future there. I think that needs to be complimented and we need to recognise that is there, then we can build on that into the future.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

Thank you.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Can I just make a brief point, Chair?

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Yes.

The Connétable of Grouville:

I recently celebrated with François Le Maistre and his son Charlie 25 years of teaching at Grouville School, where I believe it first began, and I was very proud to attend that event and we are very proud to have supported that event. All I can say is (2 second of Jèrriais spoken).

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Mèrcie.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Very good.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

That was a lovely end.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

We have overrun a little bit, but just to say we still have questions about bullying in schools, accessibility to schools, higher education and epi pens in school, so if we can send them to you in writing; is that okay?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Yes, to be honest they are quite good ones to send to us because we have already got the answers and that should be quick, and they are not massive answers so that is great.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Okay, so I think we are all done. Thank you very much, everyone.

[16:04]