

2.6 Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier of St. Saviour of the Minister for Education, Sport and Culture regarding the local recruitment of local residents for principalships in Jersey secondary schools:

What policies are in place to ensure that local candidates are able to compete effectively for principalships in Jersey secondary schools?

Senator M.E. Vibert (The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture):

Education, Sport and Culture has a structured approach to developing leadership for Jersey teachers. We have a programme that is designed to meet recognised national standards covering the major components for leadership, learning and management. We currently provide 4 leadership programmes. The 2 most relevant to headships in Jersey secondary schools are the established leaders' course. This is aimed at teachers who have been in senior posts for a significant period of time but are not head teachers. It looks to recognise their experience and talent and ensure that best use is made of these within schools. The course also exposes participants to new leadership and management techniques. Perhaps most relevant is the N.P.Q.H. (National Professional Qualification for Headship). This is a national programme that we adhere to. In England it is essential for a teacher to have this qualification before they can apply for headship. This is not essential in Jersey but we do attempt to support all experienced deputies and assistant head teachers who wish to undertake this course. It is based on the nationally recognised standards for headship and the course is designed to prepare senior teachers for headship. It is a comprehensive and very challenging course which culminates in a school-based assessment. This is a popular course and in high demand. Forty seven local senior teachers have been through this course since 2001; 11 of those teachers who completed this course are now successful head teachers in Island schools.

2.6.1 Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:

Notwithstanding those excellent courses I wonder if the Minister could outline how the appointments process assesses the fit between the candidate's ability to work in Jersey and the qualifications they bring to Jersey?

Senator M.E. Vibert:

For headships we run an assessment centre which is being proved to be the most successful way of attempting to fit a person to a job. It takes place usually over 3 days and is a very demanding assessment and we will always, if possible, shortlist a local candidate for any senior position and that local candidate will be assessed against any outside candidates. Of course, the possibility and importance of them fitting into Island life, understanding Island life and being able to settle in Jersey, is a criteria that is given attention to during the assessment.

2.6.2 Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:

Could the Minister outline, in the light of recent experience, whether his department has come to any conclusions where this process has not worked and, if so, what lessons have they learnt for the future?

Senator M.E. Vibert:

We look back after each process and we continually try to refine the process. We take the advice of the Appointments Commission - a body set up by this Assembly - and we try to ensure that we have a continuous improvement in our selection process.

Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:

I wonder if he could be more specific and ask what specific lessons have been learned from recent experience?

Senator M.E. Vibert:

The lesson to be learnt from every experience is to try to continually improve and always choose the best person for the case taking into account as many criteria as possible.

2.6.3 Deputy D.W. Mezbourian of St. Lawrence:

Notwithstanding the fact that the Minister said that people are encouraged to attend these very worthwhile courses, will he advise the House whether there is a clear succession planning policy in place for these positions?

Senator M.E. Vibert:

We encourage all deputy head teachers and assistant head teachers to consider applying for headships when they become available and we have annual reviews with all our senior staff in which their future development is considered and discussed.

2.6.4 Deputy R.G. Le Hérisier:

Would the Minister explain why in recent situations the policy appears not to have worked and what steps are being put in place to make it work more rigorously?

Senator M.E. Vibert:

I do not believe the policy has not worked. There have been unfortunately some recent appointments that have not been for the length of time one would have hoped or have not worked out as one hoped, but that is not necessarily a fault of the appointments process. I was pleased to see recently that a deputy head teacher was appointed head teacher of a secondary school and I hope that we will see more such appointments in the future and we will continue to give people the opportunity to be prepared through programmes for such opportunities, and we will encourage them to apply when they come up. We will try to carry out the best assessment possible because our aim is to ensure that we appoint the best head teachers possible.