

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, SPORT AND
CULTURE BY THE DEPUTY OF ST. JOHN
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 15th MARCH 2011**

Question

What training, if any, is in place within the school daily work programme to prepare students to enter the work place at 16 and will the Minister provide a full breakdown of the types of courses available?

Will he advise Members –

- (a) what timekeeping training, if any, is given?
- (b) what communication skills are taught i.e. employee to employer/employee to customer/client etc.
- (c) what feedback, if any, is received from the business community on the requirements of skills from the young people leaving schools.

Answer

In recent years, labour markets across Western Europe have seen a major shift away from employing 16 year olds, preferring instead a starting age of between 18 and 23 and individuals who have much higher levels of skill and maturity.

In Jersey, as with other highly developed economies, very few employers seek to recruit 16 year olds so relatively few now enter the workplace at this age. In September 2010 the staying on rate post-16 was over 90%. This year the number of 16 year olds seeking full time employment was just 67 from a cohort of over 1000.

Jersey has developed a curriculum that is both broad and balanced. At all phases of education, schools aim to provide both skills and knowledge for all pupils. From the beginning, one aim is to prepare them for the workplace. The curriculum has to give opportunities for individuals to choose their preferred route to employment – whether through an academic career culminating in higher education qualifications or more directly to a wide range of professions..

Training for employment can be said to start in the nursery stage where young children follow a practical curriculum and learn the basic skills they need to become good communicators and make decisions about their lives. This ability is formally assessed in the Foundation Stage Profile. In addition young children learn to work with others and be sociable. This includes learning to take responsibility for their own actions such as being punctual and managing and organising their school resources. Parents are an important part of the links between home, school and future work and are involved at an early stage.

In the primary stage of education, at both key stage 1 and key stage 2, this foundation is built on. Pupils develop skills and gain the knowledge required to take them further in life by following the Jersey Curriculum. Teachers are very skilled in applying this learning to the real world through

trips out, visits to business, studying weather for example and applying mathematics and developing communication skills through writing. Many primary schools have excellent links with industry, business and the arts. Visitors are encouraged to talk to pupils in schools to give them a real understanding of the police force, fire brigade; lifeboats and business. Schools have excellent links with Durrell and gain a world view. In this way communication skills are taught and pupils learn about the world of work.

There are hundreds of these learning experiences taking place each term across our schools and schools document them and are proud of these links with the community.

By the time pupils attend secondary schools they have had a wide experience of using and applying their writing skills and practising their maths skills in investigative tasks or problem solving. The overwhelming majority of pupils work at or exceed UK national standards. Some are more successful than others and know they want to pursue certain subjects in more depth such as science and maths and then go onto A-levels and university. Others who may not have developed their skills as quickly start to look for more practical uses and vocational courses. Schools in Jersey aim to meet the needs of all pupils.

Schools, therefore provide an extremely wide range of these courses and a full breakdown would involve months of data collection. In key stages three and four there are good examples of expanding programmes of vocational education for 14-16 year olds including business studies, communication qualifications directly geared to employees' needs. There is an increasing linkage between our schools and Highlands College which offers students the opportunity to develop hands-on practical skills valued by employers as well as City & Guilds qualifications in catering, construction, engineering, hairdressing and beauty therapy. These courses are provided while ensuring that essential learning in maths and English is maintained.

(a) All students are expected to be good timekeepers, not just for vocational and job-keeping purposes but for educational reasons also. As described above, this learning begins as soon as they start school. Pupils must arrive on time and be in the right place at the right time throughout the day. The curriculum gradually becomes broader and richer as children progress. Alongside this, more formal links occur with parents to discuss attendance and punctuality and schools have rigorous procedures to ensure that pupils learn good habits of time keeping and attendance. This continues through the secondary phase.

This message is constantly reinforced in a variety of ways, not just through vocational education. The attendance procedures are rigorously managed and schools continue to set targets and work towards continual improvement. Parents have an important role in helping young people achieve good timekeeping. Where persistent problems do occur the attendance team at ESC can prosecute parents.

In a small number of cases where the students have problems with behaviour and timekeeping a range of special education establishments exist which include pupils with learning problems in school based units or complex learning needs in special schools. Jersey also has two excellent provisions, D'Hautrée House and the Alternative Curriculum, where specialist teaching enables pupils who would be lost to both education and work to learn vocational skills and self management.

(b) Communication skills are taught within the school curriculum and they also feature in all the vocational programmes. Although it is expected that the large majority of 16 year olds will opt to

remain in full time education, there are well developed and extensive programmes of careers and vocational learning in place in our schools.

All key stage 4 students in States school receive regular and frequent planned careers lessons which include visits from local employers, visits to employer's premises, and opportunities to attend careers and jobs fairs. They learn about the variety of jobs, and the skills and attributes required as well as how to complete application forms, CV, and behave at interview. In addition, all local students undertake at least two weeks of practical work experience in local companies through the Trident programme.

There are also dedicated work-related programmes in each of the four 11 to 16 school which involve vocational awards and work experience. Three of the 4 11-16 schools also offer work-related programmes leading to accredited vocational qualifications and an expanding programme of 14-16 vocational education is also being developed between our schools and Highlands College

These vocational courses are evaluated and checked by the schools and exam results are measured. School governors are an important link between work and schools and they are very active in schools.

(c) There is constant and ongoing dialogue with a range of employers through the Skills Board and the Trident database, which contains contacts for 1,000 companies. Feedback from employers is fed back directly to schools who have students out on work placements and it is channelled through the Skills Board, which summarises employers' views and requirements in its annual report. The Skills Board – an employer-led advisory body to the Skills Executive – meets every month and members include officers from the three participating States Departments (Economic Development, Social Security and ESC) as well as Careers Jersey. This means the communication about workplace skills is much better than it used to be.

In 2008 the Skills Board commissioned a report by the Learning Skills Council (LSN) to ascertain the most important qualities sought by employers of applicants aged 16, 18, 21 and more mature candidates. The findings of the report were then 'validated' by local employer groups and the information was used to inform and ensure the accuracy of advice given to young people in schools.

The Skills Board has also sponsored the development of strategies to meet the skill requirements of specific industrial sectors and these strategies include ensuring that information on employment within these sectors is available to students.

More recently, the creation of the Advance to Work programme, set up directly as a result of rising unemployment among 16-20 year olds, has generated timely feedback from employers about specific requirements and generated even closer relationships. This has enabled the ATW team to identify specific training needs and create courses for specific sectors so that jobseekers can be more closely matched with companies where they are likely to improve their skills further or even obtain paid full-time employment.

If the Deputy would like further information, he is welcome to attend the department at any time.