

4.5 Deputy G.P. Southern of the Minister for Education, Sport and Culture regarding the bearing of class sizes on academic progress:

Will the Minister inform Members what body of peer-reviewed research, if any, forms the basis for the Director of Education's statements that class size has no or little bearing on academic progress and will he publish the average class size for Jersey fee-paying and non-fee paying primary schools for reception through to year 6 and account for any differences revealed?

The Deputy of St. John (The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture):

The Director of Education has not made any public statements of this nature. He did, however, have a professional conversation with representatives of the teaching unions at the end of a recent closed meeting. The point he made was that the quality of teaching is the factor that has the biggest impact on academic progress. Children benefit most if they have access to excellent high quality teachers who inspire and motivate them. I will have the average class sizes for States fee-paying and non-fee paying primary schools provided to all States Members today.

4.5.1 Deputy G.P. Southern:

Is the Minister for Education, Sport and Culture fully committed to maintaining or decreasing the size of classes in Jersey primary schools?

The Deputy of St. John:

I am committed to maintaining them. I am not committed to reducing them.

4.5.2 Deputy G.P. Southern:

Finally, is the Minister for Education, Sport and Culture aware of any research that shows the commonly held perception that smaller class size leads to improved academic results? Is he aware of research and if so, will he circulate that research?

The Deputy of St. John:

There is all sorts of research on all sections as you would expect of primary education. The size of classes is just one of them. There are pieces of research on all sorts of areas, including the quality of teaching that I have already mentioned. Some of that research is peer-reviewed and based on evidence. A great deal of it in both cases is discredited as you would expect with a hot topic that is on everybody's mind. We are, including the Deputy committed to improving standards of education and achievement in all schools, primary, secondary, further and I thank him for his interest but we will continue to monitor all evidence that there is.