

2.1 Deputy G.J. Truscott of St. Brelade of the Minister for Education regarding a structural inspection of Les Quennevais School: 1(401)

Following a major roof leak at Les Quennevais School last week, resulting in the school being closed for 2 days due to safety concerns, will the Minister agree to instruct Jersey Property Holdings to carry out a thorough inspection of the school to ensure that it is safe and fit for purpose?

Deputy R.G. Bryans of St. Helier (The Minister for Education):

I think most Members are aware of the situation that occurred last week. I can confirm the school is back and operating under normal circumstances from yesterday. But just to give some background. A water ingress problem occurred on the evening of Tuesday 27th and morning of Wednesday 28th June at Les Quennevais School. The situation could not have been foreseen. No water ingress issues on this scale had been experienced at the school during the winter months. The school's caretakers and Jersey Property Holdings team worked closely together to implement an action plan to resolve the issue as quickly as possible to mitigate the impact on the school staff and students. The decision to temporarily close the school was made by the head teacher and it was reopened, as I say, just yesterday. In view of this incident I just wanted to assure the Deputy that Property Holdings will undertake a review and inspection of the school building and produce a report on their condition. The report will identify any items to be addressed in a prioritised action plan that recognises the school is scheduled to be vacated by 2020. I can confirm that the school, while in need of replacement, is fit for purpose with its inherent constraints and will remain so until it is replaced.

2.1.1 Deputy G.J. Truscott:

I would like to thank the Minister for his assurances regarding the school's maintenance and sincerely hope that we can get through the next few years without a similar incident occurring. The head teacher and her staff and pupils do deserve better, does the Minister agree?

Deputy R.G. Bryans:

The Minister totally agrees. I think the head teacher and the teachers have done a remarkable job with the number of students they have within that school, and I repeatedly say to people who ask me about the school and how it is continuing to carry on in the circumstances they find themselves in, it is completely down to both the head, the teachers and the students, who work so well within the school. I think there is another question coming later in the questions relating to the school itself. I can confirm that we are on course.

2.1.2 Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade:

Before the incident occurred when was the last time that the roof at the school was inspected?

Deputy R.G. Bryans:

That is not really a question I can answer at this point in time. I would have to refer to my colleague, the Minister for Infrastructure. Jersey Property Holdings, I am sure, could provide that information.

2.1.3 Deputy M. Tadier:

Would the Minister circulate that information and if there was a recent inspection of the roof tell Members what the result was and whether any reparatory work took place? But a supplementary. What funding has been put aside, not just for this reparatory work, but for ongoing maintenance work between now and when the future school may open?

Deputy R.G. Bryans:

Once again, I would refer this question to the Minister for Infrastructure, who I believe has got questions without notice later. But I am sure between the 2 of us we can provide the answer the Deputy wants.

2.1.4 Deputy R.J. Rondel of St. Helier:

I was going to ask the Minister: does he have a timeline for when the inspection will take place?

Deputy R.G. Bryans:

No, I do not.

2.1.5 Deputy M. Tadier:

Insofar as it is relevant to how much maintenance is likely to take place on the current school, could the Minister give us a timeline for the start date and completion date of the new Les Quennevais School?

Deputy R.G. Bryans:

Yes, I can. I know his colleague from the Reform Party is asking a question later in this questions with notice referring to this very thing. But I can confirm that we are on track to start in 2018 and completion due in 2020.

2.1.6 Deputy G.J. Truscott:

We all agree Les Quennevais School has passed its sell-by date and I am delighted to hear that new design and plans will be unveiled on the 17th. We obviously have to wait another 2 to 3 years before the new one is ready. Does the Minister agree it is time to press on with the new build?

[9:45]

Deputy R.G. Bryans:

Yes, I would love to say it is time to press on, but I think the Deputy is aware, because he is equally on Planning, the next stage will be that it goes before the Planning Panel and we have to go through due process. This is a £40 million build and it is important we get everything right.