

2019.11.25

**10 Deputy R.J. Ward of the Minister for Education regarding the workload and marking policy agreed for use in the Island's schools: (OQ.291/2019)**

Will the Minister advise whether the workload and marking policy, agreed with the teaching unions, has been fully implemented in all schools and, if so, how the impact of this policy has been monitored?

**Senator T.A. Vallois (The Minister for Education):**

I believe the Deputy is referring to the Marking and Planning Guidance for Teachers document, which was written in agreement with all the unions and launched in September 2018. The document is published on gov.je and accessible for all teachers, parents and students. Additionally, hard copies were made available for all head teachers and staff rooms. Briefings were given to all head teachers about the document and clear reference is made to this document in the Jersey Schools Review Framework, which was officially launched this September. Off-Island lead reviewers were briefed about our approach to marking, planning and feedback and were taken through the contents of the document during a 2-day induction in April 2019. Monitoring of the guidance implementation will be part of school reviews and there are plans to further develop the consistency of the implementation.

**3.10.1 Deputy R.J. Ward:**

It is a difficult question to ask, because I understand all those things have happened but on the ... I suppose what used to be called the 'chalk face', but I am showing my age, how can the Minister be assured that a tangible change is being seen in the classroom because, anecdotally, we are not seeing what we are hearing in the Scrutiny Panel, for example.

**Senator T.A. Vallois:**

I think this is the difficulty with how we approach this particular way of dealing with these areas. Because, of course, it has got to be recognised that there is not a one-size-fits-all approach, especially when it comes to learning in schools. Teachers are dealing with very different types of behaviour, experiences, learning requirements, so it is absolutely right that we would want to ensure that we are trusting teachers to implement the right learning model within the classroom for the cohort of students that they have before them. But, like I said, the review framework that we have just launched this September will help and assist our senior advisers to ensure the intention behind the guidance, that was agreed with the unions, is more consistently applied.

**3.10.2 Deputy M. Tadier:**

Does the Minister agree that the highly-selective education system that we currently have means that workloads, depending on which school you are in, i.e., whether it is a fee-paying, or a non-fee-paying school and also depending, possibly, on catchment, means that some teachers will have much bigger workloads, because they are required to deal, for example, with lots of S.E.N.s (Special Educational Needs), for example and other more complex needs that some schools may not need to deal with. Does she agree that this means that when looking at a workplace between the schools, that needs to be taken into account? I probably will not ask any more questions.

**Senator T.A. Vallois:**

It is a slightly different expectation from the guidance that I have been particularly asked about, but I would agree with the Deputy that, of course, there are much further workloads on schools where

they have got further needs, further trauma to deal with within their schools that the teachers are having to find extra time to support, not just the students, but the families as well.

[16:15]

Also, having to support each other in ensuring that they are providing an appropriate lesson plan that is suitable for the children and working with the teaching assistants to have that one-to-one support.

### **3.10.3 Deputy M. Tadier:**

Does the Minister specifically agree that it is the highly-selective nature of our education system - I would call it the overly-selective nature at many different levels - which leads to this disbalance when it comes to workloads? Would she take it upon herself to make sure that this theme about when and if we have selection to such a high degree in Jersey persists will be included in any review that she is bringing forward?

### **Senator T.A. Vallois:**

I am not sure I totally agree whether it is an imbalance, due to purely the highly-selective education system that we have. The reason why I state that is because one of the themes that we are seeing coming through, special educational needs are not just to do with children that are not academically selected. So, we are seeing a high situation of demand in Hautlieu School, as an example and that is a selective school, even though it is a public school, but it is academically selective. So, we have got to recognise, we have to take away this assumption that we have in society that maybe just because you are bright you do not necessarily need extra support in certain areas. So, I am not sure whether I could ... I think I know where the Deputy is trying to get at in terms of the fee-paying sector, but I am just saying that there are further fundamental issues that we are having to deal with.

### **3.10.4 Deputy R.J. Ward:**

It was refreshing to hear the Minister at the public hearing that we had on Friday understand that 60 hours a week for a teacher to work is very common. Therefore, that points to the fact that much more work needs to be done on not only workload and marking policy, but the implementation to see tangible differences and, therefore, make the profession something that can be done and not take such a toll on people's lives.

### **The Bailiff:**

Sorry, is there a question there, Deputy?

### **Deputy R.J. Ward:**

Does the Minister agree? [Laughter]

### **The Bailiff:**

Do you agree, Minister?

### **Senator T.A. Vallois:**

Yes, I agree. I do not know whether I need to go any further than that, but there is a lot of work happening with around how we are working towards the future of the education system. But the guidance, the planning guidance that is referred to in your question, if that is read, there is a responsibility on us all, students, parents, teachers, school-leavers and the Department, to ensure

that we have the right workload that produces the right outcomes for our children and not unnecessary bureaucracy.

**The Bailiff:**

Can I just make the observation, without in any sense singling out the last question, but this has happened on a number of occasions during the course of the question time thus far: the poser of the question, when they are given a final supplemental question, it is not an opportunity to make a definitive statement, a summation, or make a political point. It is still the opportunity to ask a question and it increasingly appears to be the case that fairly broad statements are taking the guise of questions at the end and that is really not the purpose of questions with notice in this way.