

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION
BY DEPUTY J.H. PERCHARD OF ST. SAVIOUR
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 6th OCTOBER 2020**

Question

Will the Minister provide the following information regarding the impact of the school closures due to the Covid-19 pandemic –

- (a) what assessments, if any, have been made of the impact of such closures on the educational outcomes of disadvantaged and vulnerable children;
- (b) in light of the loss of contact time during school closures, what interventions, if any, are planned over the next 6 months for disadvantaged and vulnerable children who need immediate educational support in order to negate any negative impact of the pandemic on their educational outcomes; and
- (c) what learning interventions, if any, were implemented by the Department over the period of school closures and the summer to support disadvantaged and vulnerable children who were identified as most in need of them?

Answer

- (a) Following the school closures due to the Covid-19 pandemic the focus on the return of children was on their well-being and safe re-introduction to school under the principles of the Recovery Curriculum. The risk of learning loss affects all children, with some evidence of a greater impact on some vulnerable children and those from more disadvantaged backgrounds. This noted, some vulnerable children were able to attend school physically throughout the lockdown, alongside the children of critical workers, so benefited from small class groupings and more focus of their teachers.

The normal methodology for assessing children at the end of both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, through moderated teacher assessment under the Jersey Primary Assessment Framework, was not possible on the children's return. Moreover, as noted, the focus was on well-being. As the children returned to schools in September were advised to assess pupils on their return, and to do so no later than October half-term. Assessments are internal to the school, but the focus is consistent. This is based on teacher assessments, supported by age-appropriate reading tests and mathematics tests. Schools used a range of assessments, with the most prevalent assessment tools used including PIRA, PUMA and 'Rising Stars'. Assessments have been used to identify possible gaps in knowledge; on this basis teachers have been planning accordingly.

- (b) The latest draft report, *A Report Investigating the Impact of 'Learning at Home' on Jersey pupils as a result of COVID-19 School Closures: March to July 2020*, recognises the impact of COVID-19 on our most disadvantaged and vulnerable pupils.

A Business Case has been submitted that intends to address the impact on specific groups of pupils and covers:

- Additional training and support for teachers which focuses on enhancing teaching skills, mathematics knowledge and reading strategies.
- 1:1 and small group tuition and support. The School Improvement and Advisory Service (SIAS) have devised and prepared a 12-week intensive programme of support for pupils, should the Business Case be successful. If successful these programmes will commence as soon as possible and run until July 2021.

(c) Interventions

- The Department piloted two intervention programmes at Janvrin and Rouge Bouillon School in the summer 2020.
- The findings will be collated and shared with headteachers. The proposal will be to offer a refined model for children in 2021 in an increased number of schools based on the evidence from the pilot.