

STATES OF JERSEY

Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel Quarterly Hearing with the Minister for Education, Sport and Culture

MONDAY, 23rd APRIL 2012

Panel:

Deputy J.M. Maçon of St. Saviour (Chairman)

Connétable M. Le Troquer of St. Martin (Vice Chairman)

Connétable S.W. Pallett of St. Brelade

Witnesses:

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture

Chief Officer, Education, Sport and Culture

Also present:

Mr. M. Haden (Scrutiny Officer)

[11:00]

Deputy J.M. Maçon of St. Saviour (Chairman):

Good morning and welcome to everyone this morning to the quarterly hearing with the Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel and the Minister for Education, Sport and Culture. Minister, I believe we have communicated different areas of topic we would like to discuss with you and if, Michel, would you like to take the lead?

The Connétable of St. Martin:

Thank you. The area I would start with this morning is the skills and employment. I think we have advised you about that part. I think everyone is concerned at the moment with the skills and employment part, and especially with young people coming back from university soon and also the end of the school year coming up in June/July. The questions that I have put together about the Advance to Work and the Advance Plus: do you think the actual Advance to Work is making any difference? By that, I mean are we creating new jobs for young people or just helping them to look for the jobs that are there already?

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

Thank you for the question. Before I answer that, can I just say how nice it is to and how welcome it is to be back in the Blampied room? It is almost like a former life for me. Normally I have been used to sitting on the other side. So, very nice to see you this morning. Advance to Work. I think the best way to sum up Advance to Work would be to quote a few statistics. I will quote them publicly here, but you may want a copy, something in writing afterwards, so that you do not necessarily have to take notes on the statistics, and we would be very happy to provide that for you. At the

moment on the Advance to Work scheme there are 108 young persons. If we look historically, some 323 young persons have moved into employment on the Advance to Work scheme; 60 per cent of trainees move into paid work once they have been on the scheme and 648 have been on the scheme in total since September 2009. That includes the current 100 members. I think those statistics pretty much speak for themselves. The Advance to Work and Advance to Work Plus were initiatives started by Education, Sport and Culture, the education side. It is now “owned”, in inverted commas, because it is paid for by Social Security, but it is still operated by our department on behalf of Social Security. There are lots of further enhancements and moves to do with getting young people back into work currently underway under the general banner headline of the Back to Work taskforce. But of course obviously Advance to Work is an important part of that. If you want some right up-to-date figures, we have new trainees on the scheme in March 2012; that is the latest numbers that we have, 15 started and during March 2012 - and perhaps this is quite important - 19 people moved into employment. So 15 on, 19 into employment. The total number currently on work placements for Advance to Work is 53 at the moment, and new placements secured in March/April, that is placements during March on work, not actually in employment but in work placements, which is a slightly different thing, 20 in March 2012, and new placements secured, that is new commitments from employers for April start date is 2 at the point of these statistics. I hope that really answers your question, Connétable. I think it is our belief that Advance to Work is doing a very good job and it is creating opportunities for young people. There has been lots of criticism about whether young people have the right attitudes for work and we see Advance to Work as a key initiative to change those kinds of attitudes and to get people ready for work that maybe would not have been ready for work prior to their time on Advance to Work.

The Connétable of St. Martin:

The staff then, and officers working on the Advance to Work, are they employed by Social Security or by Education?

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

Perhaps you would like to answer that.

Chief Officer:

They are employed by the States of Jersey. So really the line management is through the Education Department. It was through the Education Department when we set it up. However the Back to Work initiative that was established by the Chief Minister brought all the resources together that were helping young people get into work and brought them under the leadership of the Chief Officer for Social Security. So there are some technical issues to work through yet in terms of reporting lines. But for the moment the resources in a sense sit with Education, so I am the accounting officer for them. But the line management is through Social Security. We hope to refine that in coming weeks.

The Connétable of St. Martin:

Okay; thank you.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

Thank you. Minister, you talked about these young people gaining employment, which of course I am sure we all applaud. But can you just expand on that? Do you mean full-time employment, part-time employment, seasonal employment? Can you just explain?

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

I do not have those numbers in front of me. My understanding is that these are proper jobs that young people needed.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

What do you mean by “proper jobs”?

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

I mean permanent rather than work placements for a limited period of time. I think that is correct.

Chief Officer:

For the most part they are permanent jobs, but I think the effectiveness of the scheme is down to 2 factors. One is that it is tailor-made to individuals; it is not a scheme that just comes off the shelf and everybody who applies gets the same treatment. It looks at the talents, the skills of individual young people and tries to tailor training programmes and work placements around their talents and skills. The second factor that makes it a success is that young people get an opportunity to demonstrate what they can do in the workplace. It is not just about an interview; it is about employers being able to see what young people can do. Most employers, certainly the figures would suggest, have been impressed with the young people they have seen and then offered them jobs subsequently. I cannot say at this time whether all the jobs are permanent or whether they are all full-time because obviously it depends on the needs of the employer.

The Connétable of St. Martin:

Does this kick in then after youngsters leave school, or what training is there or what presentations do young people still get at school level? Or are you just waiting until they have left school and they suddenly realise they are not going to get a job interview. They have gone through the last 3 or 4 years thinking: “We are going to have a wage” and then suddenly: “Hang on; there is nothing there” and this is the first opportunity they get.

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

I think there is a lot of work done within schools in careers advice areas in schools. They work very hard; careers officers within schools work very hard. They do the best that they can but of course they are not always successful. You would not expect them to be 100 per cent successful, although I would think that the number of our young people going to either university or staying in education after sixth form is extremely high. It is quite a lot higher than the U.K. (United Kingdom). Do you have a statistic?

Chief Officer:

Yes. It is over 90 per cent of young people are in some form of education and training post 16.

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

Yes; that sort of begs the question, because it has been asked before: should the statutory age that we should educate the young people be raised from 16 to 18. I mean, that is a moot point. I should say we do not have any thoughts on that at the moment, but something for a much wider kind of debate. But it is a fact that over 90 per cent of young people stay in full-time education post 16, either as I say, a lot of our young people - a higher proportion than certainly the U.K. and perhaps Guernsey, I am not quite sure about Guernsey - go on to university degree education or a very high number go to Highlands at the moment. That is borne out by the fact ... I am probably partly answering a different kind of question about Highlands. But the numbers of students at Highlands have increased from 740 to approximately 1,000 at the moment and is expected to continue to rise, we feel. But the quality and the standards at Highlands we do not think, and we have been monitoring it very carefully, have suffered in any way. We have had to increase budgets at Highlands and in fact we have growth plans in for 2013 and 2014 to increase the budgets at Highlands to suit.

The Connétable of St. Martin:

I was putting this together again yesterday and I noted the 1,000 plus students at Highlands and obviously pupils at the school leaving age up to 18 or to 20. We have been hiding the problem even more. I am not saying you are hiding the problem but ...

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

You say "hiding the problem", I mean it is a problem.

The Connétable of St. Martin:

There is a problem.

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

Oh, absolutely there is a problem. I do not think anybody would deny that there was and certainly I am not denying there is a problem. But I think it is the kind of problem that throughout the western developed world anyway is fairly common. But I think it also highlights other problems, which again the department is addressing, and that is to do with the quality of vocational education, 14 upwards. That is an area that the department and I am looking at very carefully as to how we improve the vocational offering and also the kinds of similar schemes and perhaps leading on to, and I am certainly keen to lead on to, full-time full-on apprenticeship schemes of one variety or another.

The Connétable of St. Martin:

That was another area that I have looked at as well, the pilot scheme I think at Le Rocquier. They have had refunding for a vocational type, and having looked at last week's advert there is no real vocational type jobs in there. I mean, it is café, it is hairdresser, maybe.

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

You were talking about Le Rocquier and the pilot scheme that we tried. That is specifically around certain kind of I.T. (Information Technology) initiatives that came

out of our consultation where it was clear that many parents felt that the I.T. offering at the 11 to 16 schools was not producing the kind of skill sets that were required for the I.C.T. (Information and Communication Technologies) industry in one form or another.

[11:15]

That sort of criticism was taken on board very quickly and we decided to try a couple of pilot schemes. My assistant, Deputy Rod Bryans, was interactive, and we have had one going at Le Rocquier and also Haute Vallée, which is around programming skills for the latest generation of iPhones and smart phones in general. I think the young people involved in that have been very keen and very interested. It is an after school thing; it is not part of the curriculum, and that leads into another question, which I will not answer now, to do with curriculum. But it has been very successful. The engagement from industry has been very good and we are very grateful for that. It has been partly funded by the Department for Economic Development who have also recognised the same kind of problems with the vocational offer that currently exists, particularly in I.T. Of course it ties in very nicely with the initiatives that the Treasury are keen on and in fact have funded to do with Gigabit Jersey and to do with the digital future of the Island. So it is a very good initial project for us to try out. Lots of participation and generally felt to be successful. It is a bit early yet to have a final feedback on it, but it is looking as if it has been a big success.

The Connétable of St. Martin:

For all the courses at Highlands do parents pay fees at all, or are all the courses provided free? I mean full-time courses, not evening classes.

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

Highlands offer several different courses. The kinds of courses that are not degree courses are free of charge. If there are degree courses then they fall within the category of a different part of our budget which is the means tested university degree and grant funding and also the university degree maintenance grants that are on our website. I think you are probably familiar with that. So when they become a degree at Highlands they are treated the same way as a degree in the U.K.

Chief Officer:

Courses up to 19 years of age are free. After that, for example, if there are trainees who are doing maybe a part-time course at Highlands and in full-time employment then fees would be charged; employers would make a contribution towards that. There are fees for post-19 courses for obviously the courses that Highlands runs through the year, the evening courses which do not always tend to be vocational but are more adult education programmes, and those are paid for by the students.

The Connétable of St. Martin:

Have you got your funding for 2012/2013 at this point?

Chief Officer:

The medium-term financial plan is currently being put together. The funding has not been agreed for the next 3 years. It is subject to the discretion by the Council of

Ministers, but the department has put in bids for different resources for vocational education.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

Just to jump back slightly to the Advance to Work programme, a couple of questions. Presumably you noted the 90 per cent figure. Has that been consistent or has there been an increase since about 2008?

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

I do not know the answer to that question, I am afraid. That is something that I have to follow up with, unless you know?

Chief Officer:

The trend has been upwards quite clearly, because even at Highlands you know you have 740 increasing to 1,000. If you think of the cohort, any one cohort in any year group right through the Education Service, you are talking about approximately 1,000 pupils. So when you get to 16 you have about 1,000 pupils who are just about to leave compulsory education. We know that 900 of those pupils are going to stay on in education in some form or other, go into work with a training placement, and in the past there has been about 10 per cent that we have been trying to ... Some of the harder to reach young people, and we have been trying to provide opportunities for them. This is where the Prince's Trust starts to kick in and provide support and access to programmes to help those young people as well. The changes in U.K. which have led to compulsory education or training for employment plus training up to the age of 19 really were motivated by fairly, well not low, numbers, but the numbers that were staying on post 16 simply were not high enough as far as the British Government was concerned. So it was a concerted effort to drive those numbers up. The need is not the same in Jersey because traditionally young people have tended to stay on in education post 16.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Will Highlands be able to cope with current demand for courses?

Chief Officer:

Well, 1,000 students it is pushed. I mean, you can always cope in terms of staffing because you can increase your staffing to meet numbers of students that you have got, providing the skills are available on the Island. But Highlands also use visiting lecturers to be able to support various programmes. They do not need them there all the time; they just come in to deliver a particular course. The difficulty really is around the infrastructure as to whether you have got enough classrooms, enough workshops and we would ... You know, at 1,000 students we are touching the limits for these.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Is there a problem with the number of students that are taking multiple courses; i.e. they have been at Highlands for a period of time and they cannot get employment so they jump on to another course? Is there a number of students there that are doing that because employment is not there for them at the present time?

Chief Officer:

There are a number of students which we call transfers, a number of students who will come into Highlands on a one-year course and then decided to do the 2-year bracket(?) or indeed to do another course. The philosophy has always been that it is better that those young people are in full-time education than not in anything and not able to get a job. There is some obviously consideration about specificity of those courses. You know, should they be doing this course, should they be doing that course? Should they be doing a plumbing course? It is very difficult to predict the numbers that you would need in any one sector of the economy and these courses are as much about developing generic skills, you know; working with customers, customer care, problem solving, clean working, you know, punctuality, all the disciplines of being in a working environment. It is as much about that as it is about the particular skill. So you will often see students who will enrol for one course and finish the course and then go out and get a job in an entirely different field. We have always considered that to be perfectly acceptable.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

I think what I am trying to get at is what Michel sort of struck a little bit earlier on: is it masking an underlying trend of unemployment as well? There are people there that obviously are there purely because they cannot get jobs, going around the system and probably taking course after course.

Chief Officer:

Each time that there has been a recession we have seen an increase in the number of students going to Highlands and it usually signals a step change that even after the recession has gone the numbers do not necessarily reduce that much. So you get these step changes every time there is a recession.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

From a vocational point of view as well, is Highlands adapting quick enough to the changes in economic trends? Obviously Digital Jersey is starting up now. They are going to be looking for people to work in that industry. Is Highlands College changing and adapting to the needs of industry quick enough?

Chief Officer:

I think from an officer's perspective I think the Highlands College has been very flexible and very agile in responding to the challenges. You have to remember that there are time factors involved in all this, you know. They start to recruit the students around about April for September; so you cannot just turn up in March and say we are going to have a new course and we are going to put it on this September. You need a run-in period to be able to do it. Highlands have been quick; they have been quick on their feet and there are at a higher level, at degree level for example, other players in the market now. There are other private providers who are looking to recruit students, typically people who would wish to be graduates in specific subjects.

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

I think it is true to say that the demands of industry locally, and I should think generally throughout the world, what is known as education inflation is taking place. People in the workplace and employers are looking for better and better qualified people all the time and we have to respond to that. I think as Mario says, the Highlands does a pretty good job at adapting to the requirements as time goes on.

Like all things, you know, there is room for improvement and the whole vocational offering we are looking at very carefully at the moment and particularly as we are looking to improve the vocational offering in the 11 to 16 schools. To take vocational training back further still, to sort of 14 plus, is now on our agenda very much. Where and how we supply that vocational offering, whether it is in the 11 to 16 schools itself or whether we look to doing some development at Highlands to develop a vocational centre for 11 to 14 plus age group, leading into higher level quarters for Highlands, is something that we are considering at the moment.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Touching on that, has there been closer co-operation between secondary schools and Highlands in terms - putting them expressly together - of vocational education?

Chief Officer:

Yes. Yes, there has because the pilots that were run last year were between the 11 to 16 schools and Highlands College. So for example, the schools were able to buy into courses that Highlands was providing: catering courses, things like that and to send a number of students to those courses for one day a week. We would like to build on that. But obviously if you are going to build on that it needs to be planned, it needs to be properly resourced; and some vocational courses have been run within the 11 to 16 schools as well. The thing for us is to make sure there is not too much in the way of duplication, that there is a broad range of courses being offered and that the students at that age have an appropriate amount of choice. Many 16 year-olds have not worked out what they want to do yet.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Is there also a move towards trying to get younger people, certainly from a vocational sense, not so much up to speed but interested in the tourism sector, agriculture sector? It is not just about high network jobs in Digital Jersey; it is also about where we at the present time have a lot of people coming in from overseas. Can we get our young people involved in tourism, agriculture as well? Is there a strategy through the schools to get people involved in those industries?

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

I think certainly politically there is a focus on job centric vocational training and job availability training which is, I think, what you are talking about. So yes, it is very much on our agenda and the careers' advisers within the 11 to 16 schools are extremely focused on making young people aware of where the job opportunities are and therefore what training they should be looking to. That will continue and if anything the focus will increase.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

A couple of quick ones before ...

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

If I could just make a point though about the 11 to 16 schools and where there is vocational ... At the moment we have a situation where, for example, Grainville is undergoing a lot of rebuilding and we are just opening new sports halls and phase 4 of Grainville is just about to be opened. There will be a phase 5. So it has been difficult at Grainville because of the difficulties with building and availability of space to

create much in the way of a vocational offering at Grainville; whereas at Le Rocquier, for example, because it is a brand new school, there was a lot of vocational opportunity there built in whenever there was a new school. At Les Quennevais a slightly different category: Les Quennevais has a little bit more of a focus on academic study rather than as compared to the other 3 11 to 16 schools, and it is felt that there is slightly less demand; and also you have the geographical problem at Les Quennevais in that it is not so easy for them to travel to get to town. So there is not very much focus on vocational training. At Les Quennevais we want to improve that and that is one of the areas that we will be looking at. Again, Les Quennevais will come up for rebuilding; it is too small for the number of students that it has at the moment. So within the new Les Quennevais rebuild design that is probably just about in the process of being started now, we will have to think about the vocational offering for Les Quennevais. But what is going to be more efficient? Is it going to be more efficient to have a vocational centre at Highlands, for example?

[11:30]

The jury is out on it at the moment. It is policy under development, but these are all the kinds of dynamics that were considered.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Just a short question. Obviously as the Constable of St. Brelade I will be interested in what happens at Les Quennevais. Is the intention to build on the same site or is it to move to another site?

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

Again, that is a little bit Policy and Development. Obviously when you are rebuilding a school it is chaos if you try and rebuild a school on the same site. So we are going to have to think about what we can do, whether we move to the other side of the railway track or railway walk. I think the likelihood is that we will probably have to do that, to move to perhaps the other side of the railway somehow. Again it is not easy; not an easy problem. We are going to have to think creatively.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

A lot of people will be pleased that it is being looked at.

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

Yes; it is certainly on the agenda within a medium term plan; Mario, can you remember? Is it 2018?

Chief Officer:

Refurbishment of Les Quennevais has been identified. A feasibility study was done in 2002, but the time has lapsed in the meantime, has it not? But we will need to revisit that and make sure that the feasibility study meets the kind of the needs that the school and the community have now - or back then.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

So something could happen within the term of this Assembly.

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

I am not sure whether it will be in the term of this Assembly. When was it in the ...?

Chief Officer:

It is likely they could have a full ... I do not have the exact date on me, but my recollection is that it is in the capital development programme up to 2017; it is in there.

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

It is towards the end of that.

Chief Officer:

What we need to do is to make sure that within the next year or 2 years that we have a full and proper feasibility study that sets out what can be achieved.

The Connétable of St. Martin:

Is there any independent assessment of the Advance to Work that has been carried out, or is it just assessed in terms?

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

My understanding is it is assessed in terms.

Chief Officer:

This is a scheme that was set up pretty quickly and has had to move very quickly indeed in order to be able to get the number of work places and develop the programme for the young people. So there has not been a thorough external valuation as such because the programme was only set up for a period of 2 years. Obviously that has been extended now, but it is not at this stage a permanent programme.

The Connétable of St. Martin:

To be extended until ...?

Chief Officer:

Another 12 months or more.

The Connétable of St. Martin:

... end of recession.

Chief Officer:

The funding requests that have gone into the medium-term financial plan will determine how long the programme will last. We would expect it to be required, I think, for at least the next 3 years and possibly on a permanent basis.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

If we can move on to the next topic then, the Comprehensive Spending Review. I have with me P.72/2011, Senator Ben Shenton's proposition and what I would like to ask is how ... as we are aware that the Minister was reassessing the options that the department has in order to meet their commitments to the States. I will start with a very open question: how far have you got and how will the department meet their savings' target?

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

At this exact point in time we are probably about 2 weeks away from knowing the final answer to that. The department has identified certain options for saving money, but over a much longer timeframe than the currency is at; and I think it became apparent to many people that to try to make the kinds of savings that are being asked for, or even anywhere approaching was going to be very difficult in the kinds of short term C.S.R. (Comprehensive Spending Review) type. You just cannot do that with education. You have children already in the system; you would adversely affect them; you have parents committed to sort of longer term education of their children one way or another. To try and make short-term changes with budgets was always going to be very, very difficult. So we are looking at least until 2016, 2017, and possibly even beyond, to look to see if we can make some savings through what is called demographics, and I ought to explain what that is; literally the number of children that we have to educate in one way or another. We have currently a dip in demographics that is going to work its way through the secondary system and enable us to make some savings. But then, because we have already seen that the numbers in the early years at primary school it is going in the other direction. So although we will see some savings in a 3-year timeframe between possibly 2013, 2014 and 2015 and possibly 2016, it is going to then go in the other direction from 2016 onwards and come in the reverse. Of course we do not know what is going to happen in the primary sector. Are we going to go reducing numbers coming into reception at primary? At the moment it does not look like it. But I think this whole question of demographics is linked to things like inward migration; to what level we will have inward migration and therefore have to educate the children of immigrants because statutorily we have to do that; or to what level our skill strategy will prepare younger people to displace the need for inward migration in the vocational area. There is that to speak of as well. So there are many question marks. But suffice to say that with the Minister for Treasury and Resources and the Chief Minister we have identified some savings. But I am a bit reluctant to put the detail of that into the public domain today because clearly it is policy and development and I need to discuss it with the Chief Minister, the Council of Ministers and that is due to take place on 10th May where we have a dedicated Education Department presentation taking up the whole morning with the whole of the Council of Ministers and our proposals for C.S.R. will be part of that. Following that meeting I am fairly confident that we will be able to make you aware immediately of what the current status is of the C.S.R. as far as our department is concerned. It is difficult for me to do it now.

The Connétable of St. Martin:

So really it is difficult to ask a question that was pointed out, St. Martin's School.

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

Not necessarily. St. Martin's School is on the capital programme and as soon as the Minister for Planning and Resources has finally signed it off, as I understand, it can go ahead. The money is already there. We are committed to it. There are lots of studies being carried out on St. Martin's School and subject to the sign off from the Minister for Planning and Environment, we wanted to just finally, I think, reassess any alternatives in any lateral thinking, shall we say, from his department on its location. But subject to that then I think we are all convinced; certainly the department has put in a robust plea to continue with it where it is as quickly as possible.

The Connétable of St. Martin:

Thank you. You mentioned there maybe the 2 form entry, because the plan is at the moment for a one form entry at St. Martin's School. Is that what you just said a moment ...

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

The demand for increasing numbers in the primary sector is all centred in St. Helier, pretty much. So unless you are going to think about bussing people from St. Helier to St. Martin which I do not think will be a very practical or serious suggestion for all sorts of reasons, then it probably will remain a one form entry which is what the catchment area demands, bearing in mind the travelling distances and the rest of it; bits and pieces to do with that. So it is planned to be a one form entry. We have had to open forms of entry both at Samares School and at Rouge Bouillon to go from 2 form entry to 3 form entry in both schools, and from one to 2 at Samares, is it?

Chief Officer:

It is one to 2.

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

One to 2; so Samares is going to a 2 form entry and Rouge Bouillon has gone to a 3 form entry - will be from September to cope with the extra numbers. But there is more work that we need to do around the total number of primary schools and whether they are 2 or 3 form entry, et cetera, in St. Helier. But the main problems lie in St. Helier as far as catchment is concerned.

The Connétable of St. Martin:

Is there a big financial call on interpreters now that there are Portuguese and Polish youngsters coming?

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

There is an increasing English as an additional language demand and special education need demand and again we are carrying out ... I do not know if you want to expand on this? We are carrying out a review currently of the way that we deliver special education need.

Chief Officer:

English as an additional language poses new challenges for schools and it is appropriate that the young people have proper inductions so that they can start to learn as soon as possible, and that requires additional resources. If you went back I suppose 6 years, there was one person who was delivering that and now you have 2 teachers and I think it is 4 teaching assessments. So there is an expanding service there in order to support schools. The biggest challenge of course is going to be in that area of tuition rather than with interpreters, although schools do more often than not rely on some interpreting services.

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

We do get some assistance from the Portuguese ...

Chief Officer:

The Portuguese Government provides a number of staff, I think it is 5 Portuguese teachers; but that is essentially to support those youngsters with their own language and their own culture. But over the last couple of years they have been very keen to work with the department to ensure that young people are able to access their studies in English of course, because that affects their success, particularly at examination level, you know.

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

One is always worried with something like that particular area that budgetary pressure on the Portuguese Government back home is going to adversely affect that; there was a worry about that. So I wrote to the Portuguese Government; it was one of the first things I did when I became Minister and I have had a very pleasant reply back from Portugal at a very high level which does not commit very much, because I do not think they can long term, but it expresses their satisfaction with the kinds of co-operation between our Education Service here and the teachers that they are supplying. So it is a positive letter rather than a letter which says: "By the way, we are about to cut the budget." So that is about as good as I think we can get. But we have done our very best to emphasise how important we feel it is that the Portuguese Government continue to support what we do here; and as I say we have had a very positive reply.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

Thank you.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

I do not know whether you agree or not, whether the multi-cultural and ethnic mix in some of the secondary schools has had an adverse affect on some of the results in those schools. But I did hear you on the radio this morning I think mention that you would be trying to find extra funding to improve some of the standards in some of the non-fee paying secondary schools. If you are looking for that extra money, where do you see that extra money coming from?

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

We have put in the medium-term financial plan and in this year's growth part of the Business Plan, growth bits, we are trying to improve the vocational offerings that we have already talked about. That will require money. As far as the ethnic mix is concerned, some of our most able students come from a non-Jersey ethnic background. So it is amazing how quickly young children learn English when they start from nowhere. Where you are seeing the pressure, maybe, is not in the 11 to 16 schools for English as an additional language, but you are seeing it in primary schools. You do get some in secondary schools as well, but smaller numbers. Usually by secondary school children are dual language; they have both languages very well. I have to say that it is not so much of a problem in the secondary area. It is still a problem, but not so much. It is in the primary sector.

[11:45]

So we have put in for growth plans and we will continue to put in. Are we putting growth on special educational need? As part of our review we will certainly be looking at the funding areas.

Chief Officer:

The issue in secondary is particularly when we get young people who come in later on in their school career and have not got the grasp of the language, and then have to face an examination curriculum in a very short space of time. It does not mean that the youngsters are not able; it just means that it is quite a challenge for some of them to pick up the English and to manage the examinations when they come round. There is, as the Minister says, from the request in the medium-term financial plan to develop more vocational courses in secondary schools in the coming years, and that should go some way to helping the 11 to 16 schools diversify their curriculum and introduce more options that will support those youngsters, and indeed support some of the other youngsters that some of the schools find quite challenging, those youngsters maybe with more special needs in terms of social and emotional behavioural difficulties.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Obviously, with the need to find this extra funding, I would have to ask the question about whether not just the Education Department but other departments are going to meet their C.S.R. savings generally because the Government should be committed to £65 million worth of savings. Is this department and the Council of Ministers generally still committed to finding that money or are we now moving away from that where we are saying those budgetary targets do not need to be met anymore?

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

By the end of 2013.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Yes.

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

I cannot answer for the Council of Ministers. You are asking me a question to do with the Minister for Treasury and Resources and the whole of the Council of Ministers and the Chief Minister. It would be wrong for me to make a comment on it.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Presumably it has been discussed?

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

I can only really speak for the Education Department. As far as the Education Department is concerned, I have always made it very clear that it is going to be very difficult for us to ... in a department that has more than ... if we are just talking about education for a minute, not talking about the rest of the sport and culture side, just talking about education, when you think that is it 80 per cent of our education budget is labour based with teachers ... is it 80 per cent or is it more than that?

Chief Officer:

Approximately.

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

Approximately 80 per cent, that is to a large extent beyond our control ... well, not beyond our control because we have cut down the number of teachers, I suppose, but

then you are going to get reducing standards. I am committed to not reducing the standards in our education system. I will do nothing and support nothing that affects the education of our children. That presupposes that it is going to be extremely difficult to find the kinds of levels of savings that the department was asked to make. I have always made that clear and I make it clear again. I think it is going to be extremely difficult to the point where I have to say it is probably impossible to make those kinds of savings without affecting the education of our children. So I think I am making it fairly clear as far as I can that it is going to be extraordinarily difficult to find the levels of savings in the Education Department. We have already made big savings in other parts of our department which again have been extremely difficult. I think you are aware of those in areas like sport and things like this. It has been very hard.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

Can I ask what the total to date is?

Chief Officer:

Well, so far over £3 million has been removed from the department's budget and there are obviously commitments to deliver other savings over the next couple of years. The shortfall up until recently was £7.1 million worth of savings and the Minister has been in discussion with officers and the Council of Ministers about how to make some inroads into that £7.1 million.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Do not get me wrong, I do not want to see education suffer. I think none of us want to see education suffer. I think the point I am trying to get at is that as a body the Council of Ministers are committed to £65 million worth of savings and that is what was in a way promised to the public. What I am trying to get at is, is that ... what I am saying is, is the pressure off now?

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

Could you ask me in 3 weeks' time? [Laughter]

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

We would be more than happy to have you back, Minister. We will always accept that invitation. [Laughter] On a related issue then, private school fees, has the Minister come to any conclusions on this issue?

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

We are in the process of collating and assimilating and drawing conclusions from a huge consultation exercise that took place earlier on in the year. I am personally about halfway through my own personal consultation exercise with each and every head teacher and each and every board of governors and other, shall we say, bodies. That takes a bit of time, particularly with all of this other stuff that has been going on, and I would think that we will come to a conclusion on those things and it will result in a series, perhaps, of White Papers. Even this week I am in the middle of a consultation, if you like, through the BBC and through the media with ... there is a parents and interested bodies, educationalists, question time taking place on Thursday. So I am still listening and I have not come to any absolutely final conclusions on my view on fee-paying education and grant reductions. It is part of, clearly, the C.S.R.

question that was asked just a couple of minutes ago because that was an area that my predecessor went to for the majority of the rest of the money. I am very aware that the provided fee-paying schools are part of the state system. By the provided schools I mean the States-funded Victoria College, J.C.G. (Jersey College for Girls) and their respective prep schools are part of the States system and there is a long longstanding policy in place, which I can let you have a copy of - it is on the States intranet - but it talks about modest funding gaps between the fee-paying schools and the non fee-paying schools. It also talks about the fact that the fee-paying schools should be available to people of modest means. Now, I think the linkage between reducing grants and increasing the fees is a fairly simple and understandable one. So, I am struggling with that policy and cutting grants. I would prefer to see middle income, middle Jersey being able to continue to afford to send their children to the fee-paying schools and have that choice. I think that is deeply embedded in the psyche of our community and I would not like to see that change.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

Would it not be fair to say that such a move would be incredibly politically unpopular, particularly among the demographic which has a high voting turnout?

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

I am not particularly worried about the political popularity or not. I am much more interested in the educational value and I am more interested in the wellbeing of the children that we are educating as a whole across the whole of our system.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

Just to refer to P.72/2011 as adopted by the States, which brought in the freeze to the grants, et cetera, brought by the then Senator Ben Shenton, part (c) of the proposition did ask the department to effectively start setting out service level agreements setting out minimum requirements in respect of educational standards with the fee-paying sector. How has that progressed with the department?

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

In our medium-term financial planning and our growth bids, I have applied for increased funding to something called our professional partners scheme. Perhaps you would like to give the panel the details of what that includes.

Chief Officer:

The scheme is really around how we evaluate the performance of schools. Quite clearly, at the moment it applies to state schools. It does not apply to fee-paying schools. It does apply to Victoria College and Jersey College for Girls because they are provided fee-paying schools. So obviously some arrangement for the inspection of schools needs to be agreed as part of any service level agreement, but although we have done some work on service level agreements it is difficult to negotiate an S.L.A. (Service Level Agreement) when you have not yet decided what you are going to do about the subsidies, so the 2 things will need to go hand in hand in a sense.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

So it is a bit of a dead road at the moment?

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

Would you like to expand a little bit further on what the professional partner scheme does?

Chief Officer:

The professional partner scheme does not apply to the private schools at this point in time and we have not yet discussed with the private schools.

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

What I am thinking is ... we have not yet, so that is something that we still need to do, but we believe that the professional partner scheme works very well and has been a success.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

On a slightly different thing of funding ...

Chief Officer:

Sorry, could I just add that the relationship between the fee-paying provided and non-provided schools is set out very clearly in the Education Law, the expectations that the Minister can have of those schools and their responsibilities, and, in fact, any service level agreement would simply be a question of putting the meat on the bones.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

Thank you. If we can move on to higher education and higher education fees, I believe the previous Minister made the point that effectively by not receiving the type of inflationary effects that the higher education budget should have had over the past years it has led to a stagnation and, therefore, a real term reduction in the level of higher educational grants and fees that the department has. Is this the same opinion of the current Minister?

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

Yes.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

Therefore, what is the Minister seeking to do about it?

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

Could you ask me in 3 weeks? Again, this forms part ... there are some plans that we have here but I am reluctant ... unfortunately, the timing of this quarterly meeting is about 2 weeks or so before what will be a pretty important meeting for us with the whole of the Council of Ministers. I hope ...

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

We will concede that it has been communicated to us that there is a report due in June, but we thought we would ask all the same. But we are aware that ...

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

Rest assured that as soon as I can keep you informed I would like to do that, but I hope you will understand that I need to ... with policy under development, in a public meeting it is important that I respect the process of discussion with the Council of Ministers first.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

Then with the negotiations, I suppose, between the universities within particularly the U.K., have there been any further developments? I believe there was a list of 12.

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

Yes, that is reduced now. I think there are only 2 and I do not even know that that is the very, very latest information because the 2 that are still charging over the odds and in addition to what they are charging English students are, I think, Warwick University and Cambridge. Those are the only 2 as I understand it.

Chief Officer:

Imperial College, Minister, have always charged us overseas rates and would continue to do that, so there has been no change to Imperial College but they are more expensive than the other universities.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Obviously, the students and also the parents are very important in this. I presume you agree that it is vital that parents certainly have an understanding of what commitments they are going to have with their loved ones and their siblings over a 3 or 5-year period, depending on their university course. When will they get that sort of information that they can plan ahead for the next 3 or 5 years depending on where their children are?

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

Well, for next year and, therefore, that means for the period of time that those particular students that start next year are within further education, we have said that it will be the same as this year.

[12:00]

Chief Officer:

The arrangements will be the same as for previous years. However, it is more difficult for parents to predict it because it depends (a) on the course of study; (b) on the university; and obviously (c) on the income of the family as well. So until they know how much a university is going to charge for a particular course, it is hard for a parent to know how much it is going to cost and so parents have been advised to shop around universities. The universities do not generally publish their fees until around about February, sometimes even later than that, so it is more difficult. When the fee was basically established at government level in the U.K. then we were able to predict in advance and parents could predict in advance the impact on their budgets, but that is not now the case.

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

We are in a situation even now, so we are coming towards the end of April, the universities themselves in the U.K. are still not absolutely sure how many students they are going to get in September. Because they are in a free market, the rigours of a free market mean that if they do not get enough students they may well consider giving a reduction in their courses to try to increase their number of students. I think that by September and by next New Year, so the New Year of 2013, I think those

universities are going to be in a better idea of what the reduced ... because remember that the total student numbers in the U.K. have reduced by 7 or 8 per cent off the top of my head, something in that area, so they are already seeing reduction in numbers in the U.K. of about 7 or 8 or 9 per cent overall. Now, what effect will that have on their charging structures? It could go up, they might have to put their prices up, but similarly they might decide to go for volume rather than profit. So some universities might decide: "We will get some extra students if we were to just drop that price down a little bit." But they are going to be in a position in the U.K. to know that early next year, so we are going to be in a position after that to know what is going to happen in the marketplace. For the intake of September 2012, we have already said that we are going to be applying ... most of the parents know what those rates are by now and we are not making any changes to the means testing or the grant system for the cohort that will start in September 2012 and then make its way through the system.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Is it not inevitable, though, that parents will have to pay more in the future and maybe some of the reduction in the levels of young people going to higher education now is due to the cost of it rather than the fact of their ability?

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

Well, at a political level I do not want that to be the case, but Mario will ...

Chief Officer:

The parity, if you like, between Jersey students and U.K. students, that has come about because of the changes in the U.K. Now, I mean that in some respects our students are slightly better off because they are still getting a grant. You have to remember that the majority of students in the U.K. do not get any grant now. It will be by virtue of a student loan which will be underwritten by the Government. When the changes were first made the Government stance was that no one, even if they had the wherewithal to do so, would be allowed to pay their fees upfront. They would have to take the loan and then over a period of 30 years once they started employment they would pay the loan back. Now, I understand that the Government has stepped slightly back on that and are now considering whether or not to allow students who have money to pay upfront. Their worry with this was that if they did that then they might create a divisive system and those who could afford to go to university would go and those who could not afford it would be discouraged. Of course, it is different in Jersey because students are still getting a grant, but the other challenge for Jersey students is that they do not have access to the same level of student loan as they would have in the U.K. Many parents have told us over the years that it is not just about the amount of money, it is about the availability of the money at the time when you need it and the loan enabled the families to manage a bit better over the period. But the problem is that you do not know where the universities will go or be allowed to go with their fees in the future so it is more unpredictable. If fees go up, as is possible, then inevitably it is going to cost people more. At the moment in Jersey there are 3 partners: the parents, the student and the States. If they go up, somebody within that partnership or all of the partnership in a sense will have to find more money.

The Connétable of St. Martin:

When you are talking about, and I know the Minister said before, if you have agreed to the course, is the fees for the term of that course, the 3-year or 5-year course, whatever it is, or can it go up in 12 months? A parent starts with their son at university in September and in September next year they realise it has gone up?

Chief Officer:

It has been usual for the fees to go up, usually by an inflationary amount each year, just to reflect the costs of the courses. It is unusual, it has not happened that I am aware of where a student would start a course and then they would dramatically change the fee structure of that course once they are on it. We would not expect that to happen.

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

Obviously, that is different for new starters every September. But can I just make a further comment on that? It is purely around politics. What I am seeing and understanding more and more is the level to which an education system probably in any country but particularly, it seems to me, in the U.K. is dependent upon the politics of the day. You would get a different attitude with a Labour Government perhaps than you would with a LibDem Coalition. You have seen all these changes with higher education that we have been talking about, and I can give you another prime example of how politics can dramatically alter what happens in the education system in the U.K. whereby for the last 10 years or so a lot of work, a huge amount of work, has been done on curriculum research in primary schools to the point where just before the last general election a huge manual came out for primary school curriculums and the changes that were seen to be desirable for those young people. Then the new LibDem Government just got hold of it, tore it up and threw it away and started again. So that gives an example of how politics and perceived inclusion and social agendas of all kinds can affect it. I struggle to see that that is to the advantage of the children who are being educated, and I think there is a value in stability and consistency. That is one of the values that I am taking on board when I look at the whole of the current situation with our education system. I do not want instability.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

Can I just ask how does the department determine how many people want to go to university? Let me explain this in the sense that because of the cost, while, yes, some may be able to apply for a grant, bearing the cost in mind some students may be dissuaded from even attempting. Because I could understand you will have the statistics of this many people applying ... but there will be an element where they will not even engage in that process because they know the cost will be so much to begin with. How does the department establish that or dismiss it?

Chief Officer:

It does not either establish or dismiss it. What happens is that where we would become aware of it, it would be through the careers teachers who work within the schools and, indeed, the visiting career service, Careers Jersey, when it goes to the schools because it goes around the schools and does presentations on the cost of higher education and the many other aspects that parents want to know about higher education. If you are saying how do we know how many people do not bother to apply to university because they cannot afford to go to it, or for any other reasons, we

do not. Some students just do not apply to university because they do not want to go there, so it is difficult to discern.

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

But I think it is true to say that with our grant system, 100 per cent of the fees and a quite reasonable contribution towards maintenance costs, living costs, if you are on an income level of ... or the parental income is £26,000-odd per year ...

Chief Officer:

About £26,000.

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

... which is at income support level, you get it all paid for. So I think that is a very good system. I think we should recognise that that is a terrific offering.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

I hope what you are saying then is that anybody that is able or wishes to go and has the ability does not get prevented from doing so.

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

We believe that that is the case. I think again it is another one of our policies long standing that, in fact, it uses words very similar to those that you have just used, Connétable.

Chief Officer:

The principle is that anyone who has the ability to benefit from a course of higher education should not be prevented from doing so by virtue of not having the funding.

The Connétable of St. Martin:

How would you answer the critics that say that those students should come back and work in the Island for a period of time having been sponsored, in effect, by the taxpayer?

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

There is that view. There are several other views and one of the things that has struck me is the level to which the students that we pay for to go away to university sometimes come back, or very often come back, late 20s, early 30s, having had a lot of worldwide experience, and lo and behold in tow is a spouse who also has a degree that we have not paid for.

The Connétable of St. Martin:

I have one, [Laughter] my son-in-law, but I lost a daughter in England so I cannot win both ways.

Chief Officer:

There is also the feeling that for many professions students benefit from a period out of the Island working before they come back, so they come back more experienced than they might be able to.

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

I think you only have to look at the kind of high-level, high-value jobs increasingly, and even medium-level and medium-value jobs, that we have in the Island for young adults and even for, dare I say, older, 30 year-old plus adults. Increasingly, university degrees are the norm. That is what industry requires. We are going back to the education and inflation point.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Does the careers service encourage young people into certain degree courses that would be of more benefit to Jersey rather ...

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

They certainly advise on where the jobs and where the careers ... but you would often find some quite funny anomalies. For example, it is quite well known that accountancy practices, for example, are not particularly ... they are going to take someone on as an undergraduate and train them in accounting as long as they have something which is ... it does not have to be an accountancy degree or even a maths degree so ...

Chief Officer:

The careers service is not there to guide young people into particular avenues. It helps them assess their skills, looks at the general interests and shows them the options that would be available to them and makes sure that they know what they would need to do to be able to get on that particular course. It is important that if a student wants to enter into higher education or a particular course that they are doing the subjects that are going to get them there, for example. So they provide the advice and set out the options, but obviously it is down to the student themselves to make the choice.

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

And parents; students and parents.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

If we can move on now to the next section ...

The Connétable of St. Martin:

Yes. Minister, you stated you will give complete transparency for the exam results in 2012. How are they to be published this year and do you have a timeline?

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

Well, we have issued a timeline just recently, Connétable. I do not know if you have seen that, but we have done that because we wanted the media and parents and politicians and everybody really to be aware of what we are going to publish and exactly when we were going to do it so that there was no misunderstanding. Some of the problems have been in the past that perhaps people were not clear on what was going to be produced when so you get a political reaction to that. We wanted to avoid that, which is why we have been very, very upfront with what we are going to publish and when we are going to publish it. We will be very interested in any comments that come out of that from anybody.

The Connétable of St. Martin:

The comparisons made with schools around the Island and also with U.K. schools?

[12:15]

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

Right. Well, now we are getting into the whole question of league tables. That is a discussion in its own right. We have a very complicated, highly selective system of education. There are so many imponderables, variables, that exist in our system - with something like 43 per cent selection as compared to 7 per cent selection in the U.K. - that direct comparison with the U.K. in many of the criteria that league tables tend to focus on are so far out of kilter that they are really not of much use, we believe, and also it is true to say that they can have some extremely perverse side effects. Even the U.K. themselves now are coming away from league tables even in their own system, which is a much, much bigger system than ours, one has to point to that. There is a move to come away from league tables. There is an acceptance by politicians now of some of the perverse effects, that league tables can drive the wrong kind of behaviour in schools and among parents. In the U.K. there has been a political agenda to find failing schools. Now, in the U.K. system, which is large, you can throw what is a relatively small amount of money in the overall budget of the education system in the U.K. at failing schools and you can turn them into academies and other things that they do. In a system our size in Jersey we simply cannot afford to have a failing school. This leads me back to the professional partnership schemes that we are operating. They are aimed at finding out where any problems lie, which is, if you like, the whole rationale behind league tables, to see where the problems are. We know about problems years, probably, sooner than in the U.K. system with its inspections that take place on a 3 to 5-year turnaround in the U.K. What happens between those inspections in the U.K. system, who knows? In our system, on a weekly basis the department's professionals are challenging head teachers, they are inspecting results, they are doing all of the right things that you would expect them to do on a weekly basis. The latest I.T. systems that we have in place, for the department that is, are just in the process of being able to track each and every child's progress in the Jersey educational system. League tables ...

Chief Officer:

Minister, could I just clarify ...

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

That is not to say that I do not want to be completely transparent and all of the information will be available to whoever wants it.

Chief Officer:

Just to clear up a misunderstanding, schools have always been required to publish their results. What the department has not done is to publish a league table for those results. So, someone who wanted to make a comparison of schools simply could go to the governing body's handbook, the annual report, or, if it is on their website, the website or the school directly and make a comparison quite easily of all the schools. The comparison, of course, would not be an informed comparison because it is difficult to compare one nature of a school with another. You have to compare like with like and it is not a fair comparison to put the raw results of a secondary modern school alongside the raw results of a grammar school because, quite clearly, without

the contextual references the results are not going to give you much information about the differences in performance in the 2 schools. There are various systems of value added and there have been many cries: "Well, let us have the value added data." Even last year: "Why do we not provide contextual value added like they do in the U.K.?" Had we worked on that system last year, they disbanded it in the U.K. so they have a new system for this year. What we know is that there are a number of different systems of value added ...

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Sorry, I am a bit thick when it comes to this. Can you explain and clarify what you mean by that for those that do not understand what that is?

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

Well, perhaps we should call it progress indicators.

Chief Officer:

Well, progress is ... if you look at the progress of a child and let us say for the sake of argument that based on prior attainment, their performance to date and any other data that you have about that child, for example, what we call cognitive ability tests to look at their potential ability, let us say that that data suggested that this child was going to get 5 A stars or, to make it more simple, 5 Cs, and that the child got 5 Bs. Well, quite clearly value has been added somewhere along the way. Value does not just get added by the teachers in the school; value gets added by the child working harder and also by the parents supporting the child, so it is very much a partnership. Quite clearly, if the results went the other way and the child had 5 Ds you would wonder what was going on, or if the child got 5 Cs you would say that the child had performed as expected. If you take all the children in the school and you work that up to the top, you can take a view about whether that school and the parents and the children themselves have added value to the child's education. But there are many different ways of calculating that and some are very, very complex. For example, contextual value added in the U.K., which they have moved away from, comes up with a figure for a school. Your school could have a value added figure of 1,610. Well, what does that mean to parents? Then you go back to the way they calculate it and you get points if the child is ... perhaps English is an additional language, if they have special needs, if they have free school meals, and I think there are about 9 criteria that apply to the contextual value added. We do not collect much of that information in Jersey. There are not free school meals. I think ...

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

Free school meals ...

Chief Officer:

As an indicator of deprivation.

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

We are talking about deprived children who have free school meals.

Chief Officer:

So the point is there are a number of different systems of value added, but value added systems themselves can favour different schools. You can have a value added

system that favours a selective grammar school or a value added system that favours a secondary modern school. What we have been working on is our own system because quite clearly any changes in the U.K. system, if we follow it, are going to affect us. Usually, we are lagging behind at least a year because they implement it, we then have to find out how they do it and then we have to decide whether or not we can copy that. We have been working on looking at the progress of children from the beginning of their schooling years, from reception, from nursery, right through and trying to come up with something that gives us some secure indication that this child is making good progress and is going where they should be going.

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

Regardless of their ability.

Chief Officer:

We base this at the moment on teacher assessments that happen in primary schools at key stage 1, key stage 2 at the end of primary school, and now key stage 3. We do not have S.A.T.s (standard assessment tasks) in Jersey. Two former Ministers ago made the decision that we would not continue with S.A.T.s. We do not have independent examination information for primary schools.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

Is that at every level?

Chief Officer:

That is at every level in the primary school. There are no examinations. There are tests that occur, reading tests, et cetera, but there is not a standardised examination that is applied right across the primary schools. So our judgment of performance in primary schools is based on the teacher's assessment of where the pupils are. Therefore, you have to make sure that all the teachers are assessing to the same level.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Well, one question there would be how do you pick up failing teachers?

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

You compare to the national curriculum. Do not forget that there is a national curriculum expected level for a child at, say, key stage 1, year 1, year 2, year 3. So when teachers assess, they assess against that national curriculum criteria.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

But when the teachers are doing the assessments, how do you assess the ability of those teachers?

Chief Officer:

Well, the first thing that you do is obviously within your schools you have head teachers who are responsible for monitoring performance. So your first port of call is the head teacher, who will be looking at the results in individual classes and will do more than that, will observe lessons and will know about the quality of teaching in there. Then we have what is called moderation, and this is where we bring samples of work from different schools together to make sure that the teachers are assessing around about the same standard. So we compare the work done at key stage 2 in this

school with the work done at key stage 2 in this school, and indeed all the schools in the Island, to make sure that standards are consistent.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Who carries out those assessments?

Chief Officer:

Those assessments are carried out by a group of teachers who have been trained in those processes, and those teachers are overseen by our professional partners, who are our, if you like, inspectors in residence in the department. So through our evaluation process, a professional partner would go into a school and if you were the head teacher, the professional partner would be saying: “What are your standards like?” You would produce those standards and then you would talk through the evidence. It might be: “Here are some children who are doing very well. Here are some children who are under-performing. What is going wrong here?” It might be that the head teacher would say: “Well, those children have special needs.” “Fine, what have you done about it?” There is a dialogue about the way that the children’s needs are being met within the school. Through those processes you can see where children are doing very well, where they are not doing so well, you can see where there is an experienced teacher in the classroom, where there is an inexperienced teacher in the classroom, and schools are moving in terms of performance all the time.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

So you can pick up the individual failings as they come along?

Chief Officer:

You can pick up inexperienced teachers, teachers who might need support, and you can ... most of our work over the last 2 years with professional partnering has been around explaining to schools just how good they are. Because some of the schools are outstanding in the work that they are doing with young people, and this process highlights that as well. So it is not as punitive as, for example, the Ofsted process of inspection, and it is far more frequent. So, as the Minister says, it is about ensuring that schools do not fail rather than finding failing schools.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Who has put your own system together? How has that been identified?

Chief Officer:

We have done it in-house. We have put it together based on basically our experience of what we have seen across the schools in Jersey and some of the issues that we have had to deal with in the past. The classic one would have been, I guess, Le Rocquier many years ago when we all remember it was very prominent on the front page of the *Jersey Evening Post* because of its perceived failings. The problem is that while that was highlighted for the public, it can create a spiral of decline within the school because parents lose confidence, pupils’ self-esteem is often affected, teachers do not particularly want to go and work at what they perceive to be a failing school so it affects your capacity to recruit, and it just makes the challenge of turning the school round all that harder. So, basically, we have learned our lessons from those experiences and tried to develop a system that prevents it rather than deals with it.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Who are or what is your in-house team? Where is that developed from?

Chief Officer:

The in-house team is currently led by an ex-Ofsted inspector who has led many inspections in the U.K. and been a part of many inspection teams.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Is he based here?

Chief Officer:

He is based here. He has been with us for 2 years and is with us for a further year to help us develop it. There is another inspector who we have recruited who has residential qualifications, who was an inspector in Bournemouth. We have one local person who we have trained up with obviously the experience of the other members of the team.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Is it the intention that they at some stage take over from the Ofsted inspector that you have, the one that is ...?

Chief Officer:

Well, quite clearly, at the end of 2013 there will be a need to recruit to that post and whether that is an appointment locally or an appointment off the Island will depend very much on the quality of the field and their experience.

The Connétable of St. Martin:

Is the Minister able to say how the publication of the results will be different this year, apart from the date, the timetable you set?

[12:30]

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

I think the single most important thing is confidence here that we are not trying to hide anything. I think Mario is better qualified to answer that question, if you do not mind me saying, because he has experience of previous years that I do not personally have.

Chief Officer:

I think the main difference is going forward, not all this year. The main difference for this year is there is a very clear schedule of publication. Schools know exactly what they are required to publish and they know what days they are required to publish them on. Last year for the first year we published our comparisons of the old polling(?) results with the various regions in England as well as the national data, and we would wish to continue that this year. Going forward, the challenge for us will be to find a way to publish meaningful data about primary performance and, of course, that can only be based on robust teacher assessment.

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

That is on progress indicators.

Chief Officer:

As we move forward then probably looking around 2013/2014 we should be able to publish more value added data about secondary schools because that year group will have the secure data coming through from primary schools. So if you are going to have value added for any one pupil you need to be confident in the data you have about that pupil in their primary years, the data that you have about them at the end of key stage 3 which is their third year in secondary school, and their G.C.S.E. results. So we are confident that by 2014 we will have a complete set of data for just about every child who has been in the education system from the beginning and so, therefore, we will be able to publish some more meaningful value added data. At the moment we are simply publishing the raw results, all the individual subject results and the comparisons with the U.K. We are meeting with Guernsey next week to discuss how they are going to publish their data and how we might wish to compare with them, we have not always been able to do that, so hopefully a Guernsey comparison will be in this year for the first time but that will depend on them and, as we have done in the past, the national data.

The Connétable of St. Martin:

Do you get the information from the private schools?

Chief Officer:

We do, it is all included in our data.

The Connétable of St. Martin:

You have explained the professional partners, thank you, and are they working with schools already?

Chief Officer:

That is right. If you think the difference is that you have an Ofsted inspection of a school in the U.K. you could have it very frequently if it is a failing school but more likely once every 4 or 5 years and it would be without notice. Our professional partners can be in schools every term and more if necessary.

The Connétable of St. Martin:

Reporting back to you?

Chief Officer:

Reporting back to us and if we need a further degree of independence we bring across Ofsted trained inspectors from the U.K. to work in our schools but they work to our framework.

The Connétable of St. Martin:

You will be able to compare data now from previous years for the local schools to identify a school that might be failing?

Chief Officer:

You can do that. Obviously you monitor trends in schools. It is not unusual for schools to peak and trough, you need to be able to look at the trend but 3 years is a pretty good trend.

The Connétable of St. Martin:

I know the Minister spoke and had a presentation at St. Pauls, and I have heard you before, but trying to keep the morale of staff up and you get the media criticism all the time, staff trying to work in schools that have had most of the high performing students removed from them, it must be so difficult. Do you still continue to address the staff or just do it through the head teachers?

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

I think the point that Mario made a few minutes ago was quite interesting when he said that a lot of what the professional partners do is recognise what a good job many teachers do. I think that politically it is time that we celebrated the job that teachers do generally because I think there is always room for a little bit of improvement but we have a whole range of very committed, very dedicated teachers in this Island. I think that it is certainly time that we recognise and celebrated that fact. We are all working towards the same thing and I know that teachers have got the children's best interests at heart. It is time that we ...

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

Can I just jump in on a slightly related topic and you did mention this earlier, Minister, the skills strategy, when is that due to be available and can you tell us what the key targets for the strategy will be?

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

It is imminent. I have a draft for the new skills strategy with me at the moment, it is also with the Minister for Social Security and the Minister for Economic Development. If it is approved the aim would be to take it to the Council of Ministers for adoption and it would be launched at the same time as the Strategic Plan and the policy for economic growth. But I need to speak to Skills Jersey which is, as you know, a body which is, I accept, representation. But subject to their agreement you could have a copy of that new skills strategy close to when the Council of Ministers is considering it. So that is, I would think, imminent.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

Thank you. If we could move on to the next section then.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Just regarding the Youth Service, obviously there have been some cuts and obviously there has been a saving of around £100,000 in 2012. In regard to the shortfall how have the Parishes reacted to the need to invest further in their youth projects and do you believe all the shortfalls will be met?

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

Can I just, if you would not mind and with respect, just correct you on something. There was £50,000 saved in the Youth Service in 2011 and that was achieved through the reduction of a management post and a couple of other minor changes. A further £100,000 which you referred to in 2012 is not the case. It is due to be saved in 2013, not in 2012. I have already flagged up the fact that I have concerns about whether that is going to be possible and it is part of the C.S.R. discussions. So, again, it is

subject I am afraid to the fifth amendment at the moment but that will come with the C.S.R. I think it is due to be in the public domain in about 3 or so weeks.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

All right. Obviously you have been in discussion with various Parishes ...

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

Certain of the Parishes have certainly made extra contributions and we are very, very grateful for that.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Well the question would be obviously some Parishes have been in consultation, some I know are still in the process of so doing. Mine, for example, has more or less gone through that process. I mean, do you envisage any further cuts in the Youth Service, and really what I am saying to you is that in St. Brelade, for example, I am looking to put something in place over the next 3 years and are the Youth Service looking at any further cuts in the next 3 years that there is the potential for me to have to find, as a Constable, more money?

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

I cannot speak for what a future Ministry of Treasury might do in the way of Comprehensive Spending Reviews or whatever, but suffice to say that - and as I have already said - I think finding the £100,000 in 2013 is a very, very difficult task for the Youth Service. I think there is an aside, I have just recently come into the knowledge that some statistics on the number of young people - this has come about from a different angle - in custodial sentences. There is a very clear trend that has reduced so I think that what it says to me is that the work that has been going on through the Prince's Trust, through the Youth Service, through the various inclusion agendas that we have, our alternative curriculum that we have not talked about, and the work that the 11 to 16 schools are increasingly doing is plain in evidence, it really is. So at a political level I would be very much against cutting money from the Youth Service, I think it is working well and we are really getting somewhere. That is the kind of statistical trend that I have seen.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

From reading from what you are saying there, that this is not the time to be pulling money out of Youth Service, it is the time to be investing?

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

Absolutely. I think it is working well and I would not want to see that trend reverse.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Just one idea that came up and I think it is something that has been spoken about with the Comité des Connétables, is perhaps a common formula for providing some financial support from the Parishes, i.e. all Parishes give it the same sort of equal amounts. Do you think that is going to fall on barren ground?

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

I think you are better placed to answer that one than I am, Connétable, to be honest. You have a seat on the Comité des Connétables and I do not.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

But is that something you would like to see put ...?

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

Well, as you know, we had a meeting with the Comité des Connétables on this and it did highlight some anomalies, shall we say, in what some Parishes do and some Parishes do not do. But one has to take it and bear in mind that Parishes sometimes contribute to youth work in different ways, directly in many cases with youth clubs and what have you. So we had that conversation and I think it was a very interesting conversation that we had and I have no doubt that after I left the room the Connétables continued to discuss. So we will have to see, it was only a couple of months ago so we will have to wait and see what the Comité feel, but I think overall I certainly recognise and I believe there is a general consensus in the Comité des Connétables that all of the Connétables recognise how important a job the Youth Service does. As I say, statistics are telling me that we are starting to get some payback.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Just one comment that you made, I think it was to the Assembly at some stage, is that you would like to see more emphasis on on-street work. So in terms of on-street work what resources would you like to see put in place to help more ...

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

Well specifically in your Parish we wanted to see more outreach work and I think that, as you know, we are discussing a situation whereby we do slightly less in house and more outreach work, particularly in your area, and I think that is a positive move.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

But that is Island-wide as well?

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

When I made those comments I was thinking about Les Quennevais area.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Was that not more, in some ways, linked to the fact that the actual youth club itself was costing the Youth Service so much money?

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

No, not particularly, I think it was just generally. I have a feeling that outreach work is extremely important but I was thinking at that time about Les Quennevais but now that we have got the town park open there is more outreach work that we need to do there. In Springfield area there are a few problems, sporadic, not a huge problem but it is an area that we need to not lose focus.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Could you enlighten me a little bit on the invest to save scheme that I know has been spoken about?

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

Invest to save?

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Well, I think I was speaking to your Deputy about it, in terms of if savings can be made there is a fund available to allow certain ...

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

This is linked to the Comprehensive Spending Review?

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Correct.

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

Could you ask me that question again because there are certain things that are included in the C.S.R. which are to do with invest to save where we might be able to save some money by investing in certain ways in infrastructure, schools and things.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

So that is still up for discussion?

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

It is, yes, it is still there. Some of the C.S.R. savings that we have made fall into the category of invest to save, one of them that springs to mind was the question of whether St. George's school was an invest to save initiative whereby we paid them money in advance so they could buy their freehold, which meant that we saved money long term.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Just moving on to another subject a little bit, the Move On Café is that on the horizon, or when is that likely to be achieved?

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

I do not know the answer to that but I can come back to you on it.

Chief Officer:

I have not had the latest update but before the Easter holidays we were aware that things were moving along faster than they had been in the past, but I am not sure how far we have got to.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Is there one particular stumbling block with it?

[12:45]

Chief Officer:

There have been issues along the way.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

Is that funding related or ...?

Chief Officer:

No.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Was it over the lease?

Chief Officer:

There are a number of issues that would be better discussed in a private forum.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Okay, just one other from me, obviously there is a proposed move to St. James at some stage, again, is that something that is likely to happen sooner than later?

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

What is the status on the St. James, that is Property Services that are leading that. We are due to consider a review of the whole of our property portfolio that has been carried out by Property Services and the St. James is part of that, as is the La Motte Street Youth Service. The proposal is that the new service moves from there to St. James and money is saved. I think there probably is a timescale of 3 to 6 months, I am guessing, before we move forward on that but we need to have some further discussions with Property Services on exactly what they are going to do. Again, I was not involved in that.

Chief Officer:

The property review is an evaluation basically of the estate for Education, Sport and Culture, how well it is being used, whether it is good value for money and what the options are for any changes. That is one of the issues that comes up as an option for consideration but there have been no decisions made about it.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

So that review covers the whole of the Education Department?

Chief Officer:

It covers everything.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Presumably that will be a report that will be up for review?

Chief Officer:

Well it will be a report that hopefully will be available in the next few weeks.

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

While you have been away on holiday I think it came.

Chief Officer:

It is now available.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

There is a lot that has gone on when you have been away.

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

I think I saw something last Friday.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

I am just conscious of time and we have just got a few things left to ask. One that did not quite fit anywhere, but Fort Regent, in the political steering group, I believe last time there was a proposition to the States to appoint members of that panel. It has not occurred yet under your term, is it on your radar, Minister?

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

Well it is not my responsibility because, again, it is Property Services. But what I can say is that I know - and I do not think I will be speaking out of term if I were to tell you - that the Chief Minister and the Minister for Treasury and I are very interested in pushing and moving Fort Regent, unlocking the ... I do not know what the word is.

Chief Officer:

Impasse.

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

Impasse, whatever, of Fort Regent. The thinking at the moment is to create a new ministerial group to lead it which the Chief Minister will be on. It will be chaired by Deputy Noel who is the Assistant Minister in charge of Property Services because it is right in the midst of his portfolio. I will be on it and there will be a fairly high power team of ministers, therefore, and we will be committed, I am sure, to bringing some proposals to the States. But they will involve obviously investment at one time or another, which is why it is so important that it is chaired by Property Services.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Would that be new money investment?

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

I cannot say.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

Then the future of Education, obviously we are aware that the previous Minister launched his Green Paper. Can we ask, what were the key findings of the consultation carried out last year?

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

Well the findings were, as you would expect, vast and you have many people wanting to go one way and many people wanting to go the diametrically opposite way. Overall is there a lot of information though in that consultation, that Green Paper. We are collating it, as I said earlier. I hope that following the C.S.R. agenda, once that is resolved in a couple of weeks' time, and following our half day with the Council of Ministers, I hope that we will be in a clearer position to start thinking about moving forward with perhaps a series of White Papers based on that.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

Are you able to give us a timetable of that?

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

It is just slightly early at the moment for me to be able to do that but it will obviously be in the autumn after the summer recess period, then that will take place.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

Finally, the final question from me today, the Island anthem, there were various undertakings that the previous Minister was going to take to the States to ratify or not the proposed anthem. There was a stalling in that there was the time that the Island had to get used to the anthem, it is notable that it has even been dropped from the Liberation Day celebrations. Is the Minister going to bring forward that proposition and if not, why not?

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

I have to say you have caught me out with this one. I do not really have a particularly strong view either way. It is not on my agenda because I have been concentrating on things like Comprehensive Spending Reviews and Green Papers. That is something that I believe would probably need to be progressed by the Council of Ministers as part of the latest feel good survey agenda and whether perhaps that is a way forward for that. Are you familiar with that?

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

No, it had always sat previously in the remit of the Minister for Education, Sport and Culture.

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

Yes, I understand. I do not have a view. It is something that I can consider but it would be wrong for me to give you an off the cuff because I have not done any research on it at all and I was not even aware that the previous Minister had, to be honest, committed to bring that forward, I am afraid. So, as I say, I have been concentrating on things like C.S.R. and education review and the future of education.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

Do you have any final questions?

The Connétable of St. Martin:

No, thank you.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

Any final questions?

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Well not question but just something I would like to add. Obviously after the weekend I am sure the Minister would join the panel in congratulating the Jersey Rugby Club in their promotion to the championship and I am sure like others we would like to wish them all the best of luck next season in what will be quite a difficult adventure, I would have thought.

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

Very much agree with you.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

I am just conscious of time, are there any final closing comments that you or your director would like to make to us?

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

Not particularly, other than there is quite a lot of stuff we have committed to do and hopefully we will be able to progress that in the next 3 month quarterly period.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

No doubt we will be chasing you. So on that final note I would very much like to thank you for attending today. We will of course be in contact with any issues that we have. Thank you very much for your time.

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

Thank you.

[12:51]