



Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel

Quarterly Hearing

Witness: The Minister for Education

Friday, 22nd November 2019

Panel:

Deputy R.J. Ward of St. Helier (Chair)

Deputy T. Pointon of St. John

Deputy R.E. Huelin of St. Peter

Witnesses:

Senator T.A. Vallois, The Minister for Education

Deputy J.M. Maçon of St. Saviour, Assistant Minister for Education

Mr. S. O'Regan, Group Director of Education

Mr. K. Posner, Director, Policy and Planning

Ms. S. Famili, Director of Young People, Further Education, Skills and Learning

Ms. J. Terry-Marchant, Acting Principal, Highlands College

[10:02]

Deputy R.J. Ward of St. Helier (Chair):

Good morning and welcome to the quarterly hearing with the Minister for Education. I draw your attention to the information of Scrutiny, which you are probably very well aware of. I will ask people to not have their phones on, please, and there is no filming, but it is available as a webcast so that should be fine. I think that is just about everything we need to say unless there is anything else. That is great. We will just introduce ourselves briefly. I am Robert Ward, I am the Chair of the Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel.

Deputy T. Pointon of St. John:

I am Trevor Pointon, Deputy of St. John. I am a member of the Scrutiny Panel.

Deputy R.E. Huelin of St. Peter:

Roland Huelin, Deputy of St. Peter, good morning.

The Minister for Education:

Senator Tracey Vallois, Minister for Education.

Assistant Minister for Education:

Good morning, everyone, Deputy Jeremy Maçon of St. Saviour, District Petite Longueville, Assistant Minister for Education, Assistant Minister for Health and Social Services and Assistant Minister for Social Security.

Director of Young People, Further Education, Skills and Learning:

Saboohi Famili, Director for Skills.

Group Director of Education:

Seán O'Regan, Group Director, Education.

Director, Policy and Planning:

Keith Posner, Director of Policy and Planning at C.Y.P.E.S. (Children, Young People, Education and Skills).

Deputy R.J. Ward:

If anyone else comes to the table you can just introduce them when they get there. We note from our review of the Government Plan that the Jersey Schools Review Framework is fully rolled out since September 2019. Just for the benefit of the public, could you outline just briefly the purpose of the review framework?

The Minister for Education:

In a very quick summary briefing of the review framework, the idea behind this, it has been piloted for the last 3 years and the reason for the launch only in September was because it is a fairly new thing to Jersey and the intention behind it is to help schools to improve in terms of standards of achievement. It is a support mechanism, but also what I would like to explain, like an accountable mechanism as well. There is that push and pull between both the department and the teaching staff and the head teachers about how the Education Department can support the schools and how the schools can improve, whether that is through continuous professional development, whether it is

extra resources that are required, and how the children are progressing, individual progression, in terms of their achievements in schools.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

There was a review undertaken of the pilot. What was the process undertaken to review the pilot of the review framework?

The Minister for Education:

If you do not mind, I will ask Seán if he can just explain the process.

Group Director of Education:

Just as the fundamental premise of the Jersey Schools Review Framework is that external eyes help all of us improve what we do, once we had concluded the 3-year pilot of all of the Government of Jersey schools we went out to procure an independent review. We looked for expertise that was broader than just the English system, so secured an academic professor from the Institute of Education, University College London, who, with a senior research associate, visited the Island, did desk-based research, 4 days on-Island, visited schools, spoke with teachers, head teachers, officers of the department and did a written review of the pilot period, including a document review of all of the pilot reviews.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

That was about the process of the review in the school, was it? Was it about the impact of it?

Group Director of Education:

It was to scrutinise and feed back on our whole approach, the whole architecture of the framework from the handbook to the training offer to the known and anticipated impacts.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Do you intend to publish the outcomes of that review?

Group Director of Education:

The review obviously was first and foremost for the Minister. I understand it has been shared in confidence for eyes with Scrutiny, so that is subject to Ministerial Decision that it be published.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Are you likely to put that into the public domain?

The Minister for Education:

I do not particularly have any issues with putting it in the public domain. In terms of openness and transparency it is probably a good thing to do. Just to make sure that there is no confidentiality within there in terms of data, but I do not think there is, so I do not particularly see an issue.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

I am just thinking more about as well the staff involved in the review and their experience of the review of that review, so to speak, that should reflect what they have experienced.

The Minister for Education:

It is quite clear, so from one of the lessons that could be learned is being better at feeding back to teachers and this would possibly be one way to do that.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Just a couple of things about it, because in the R.91, which accompanies the Government Plan, it does say the Jersey Schools Review Framework has been the single most significant improvement development in the Island, which seems to pre-empt the outcomes of that, so it is a very important thing. Can I ask what evidence is there that it is helping the development of children and young people, this process?

Group Director of Education:

The pilot school reviews have given the department far more intelligence, information and data on our schools than has ever been the case, certainly in living memory of anybody working in the department. Analysis across the pilot reviews showed us, for example, that there was learning for us in the calibre of leadership in our schools, the quality of teaching in our schools, how we support the welfare and wellbeing of children and young people that might manifest at times in behaviour issues. As a direct consequence, we have refocused resource, so we have launched a new teaching programme that has many classroom teachers learning new approaches to teaching, learning and coaching their peers. I was with the Minister in a school this week, Wednesday, and saw some sparkling mathematics teacher on this programme who was telling us how great it was. Now, that programme has directly flowed out of the evidence of reviews and obviously, as the Chair knows very well, high-calibre teaching leads to high-calibre learning.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

But are there any issues in terms of performance improvement plans? Is the review framework dependent upon a quota of performance improvement plans in a school? Would the reviewers

expect there to be a certain number of people, of staff, on performance improvement plans? Have you heard any of that come from the review system?

Group Director of Education:

There is absolutely no expectation.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

There is absolutely no expectation from any review as for a school to have a certain number of staff on performance, so it is not an expectation?

Group Director of Education:

It is not an expectation.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Just to be clear about performance improvement plans, they are linked to competency in the long term; they could be the beginning of a competency process.

Group Director of Education:

That was ever thus. Whether there is a Jersey Schools Review Framework - sorry if I am misunderstanding the question - but the use of performance improvement plans as part of H.R. (human resources) processes that look at capability or competency, that is norm. The Jersey Schools Review Framework came after that and certainly did not ...

Deputy R.J. Ward:

But after a school review has there been any cases where the expectations of staff to be on performance improvement plans has come from reviews?

Group Director of Education:

We have the handbook that governs the whole framework for school review, I have been through it word by word. In fact, the Minister read every word and helpfully found a couple of typos for us that we missed. There is no reference to an expectation. The school review methodology, as the Minister absolutely rightly said, does 2 things: it helps us improve our schools and it offers accountability. In all walks of life, having external eyes on what we do, just as Scrutiny scrutinises the Government, my work is scrutinised and we scrutinise our schools, but it is a developmental process.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Have you seen any evidence that more staff are on performance improvement plans following the review framework, which has gone to all schools, than there were before, i.e. could there be some sort of second-level evidence that it is generating performance improvement plans for staff, given that they are linked to competency in the long run? Are you aware of that? Have you looked into that?

Group Director of Education:

The pilot reviews, as I say, are all about Government schools, primary, secondary, special. It was based on improving the framework and the handbook. That was their purpose, obviously to give a snapshot of where the school was over that 3-day period of a visit of a school review team. But over that period the handbook changed 2 or 3 times, so it was an iterative process. We are using the pilots both to give feedback to the schools on where they are and we used it to train our heads and deputies and some senior teachers in school review methodology. If there are examples - and the Deputy may well have those - where a teacher overreacted or responded in certain ways to a review, that was not about the pilot or refining the framework. The monitoring of ...

Deputy R.J. Ward:

But is it so? What I am trying to get at is this: is this framework, which you see as so positive, generating a situation where staff may well be ... as a product of a review, individual staff may be put on performance improvement plans, indeed, head teachers may ask people to volunteer to go on them so that they can show that they are taking some actions?

Group Director of Education:

That would be completely contrary to the spirit, the practices we have published. There should be no surprises. We had a live review last week in a school and what they are doing is reflecting back to the school's leadership what their self-evaluation of the school is. There should be no surprises. If a member of staff is struggling with their performance, which could be not related, it could be related to training or ill health or a whole range of reasons, that will be reflected in the regular work of the school, watching lessons and analysis of data. There should be no surprises for a school in a school review. But there should be constructive feedback on how to celebrate what is positive and build on what needs improvement. It is absolutely not planned and we are just live now. As I was saying, not that this would precipitate a heightened load of competency procedures.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

You have not heard any concerns of staff feeling that has been a product? Another example is that staff feeling that ... there is a phrase that we come across, which is review ready, a school being review ready, so if you like on a constant state of preparedness, which I am aware of the framework

and it does seem to go against what the framework is trying to do. We raise this as Scrutiny Panel because it is really important that you are aware of something that, as you have said yourself, this is the most significant development improvement in the development in the Island for schools. If there are issues like that in the background that are not being dealt with, it could be rather counter, quite destructive to the process.

[10:15]

The Minister for Education:

It goes back to the culture in the individual schools and the way some leaders may perceive or see the way of doing things or that is maybe an experience that they have had elsewhere. It is not appropriate because ultimately you can write all the right things down in a framework and a guideline, but if the culture is not right then that will not feed through into the proper intentions of the policy and the framework that we put in place. There has to be some give and take and there has to be some accountability to those people that are approaching this in the way that it was not intended.

The Deputy of St. John:

Is there not then a question to be asked about whether the review process is appropriate if it is dependent upon individuals who can be flexible and who can work within it rather than preparing in advance and restricting the process?

Group Director of Education:

I will make two observations, hopefully to be helpful. We have evolved a school review system, which is an accountability system that is bespoke to Jersey. They exist in most jurisdictions; they have names in Wales, Scotland, England and Ireland. In that sense, I have picked up on it and every time I hear it I re-explain why being review ready fundamentally misunderstands the purpose. But here is the thing, with the pilot we looked at the issue of what notice we give a school, because clearly, while this is a development process, it is absolutely bounded on being supportive. People sit up straight, teachers want to teach as well as possible, heads want their schools to be as successful by their pupils as possible. This methodology is to help that process. In the pilot, we gave schools 2 weeks' notice. What we actively discouraged, and we did this formally and in heads meetings and follow-up with senior advisers, is the school does not put on a show, it does not make something look other than what is normal, and it certainly does not get into the freneticism of teachers coming in long and late and mounting displays and weekend working. We deliberately did not give the 2-week notice either side of a half-term break ever. By consulting and looking at the pilot we were asked to reduce that period, so now there is a 4-day notice from the phone call to the head to say: "You are being reviewed next week" exactly to cut out any of that anxiety. Schools I

would not say run business as usual, because schools are aspiring to improve all the time, but it is to capture the real working. Fellow heads and deputies, the off-Island external reviewers are skilled enough that they would see through anything that was artifice anyway.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

The concern is this is a very high stake review, given the importance that has been put on it, as the significant improvement development in the Island, so it is a very important process for schools for development. What you have is a chain of events from these improvement plans are linked to competency if they are being used in schools inappropriately and we are reliant upon individual heads and the autonomy that had been given, which I do not think has ever really been understood by head teachers, that you do have some variables in there, if I may use that phrase, that you cannot control. You are convinced that it is working very well, but we are seeing levels of concern over it at times and it is creating stress among staff and perhaps I am just concerned that you are addressing those issues openly as well, given that you have reviewed the pilot and it is going to continue.

The Deputy of St. John:

Let us just take a practical example. You have a head teacher who is so anxious about his school's performance and being seen to be underperforming that he keeps everybody in a state of readiness all the time lest there should be a review plonked upon them at some time, so he is saying to people: "We need to be review ready at all times." How do you deal with that individual and his or her anxiety?

Group Director of Education:

I would need to know that was so.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

How would you know that was so? This is the issue, how would you know, short of a member of staff coming to speak to you? Because that is unlikely, how would you know?

Group Director of Education:

No, it is likely. We met lots of teachers. Every time the Minister goes out we actively go over a lunchtime break or end on to the school day and invite - no compulsion at all - teachers to tell the Minister and myself what they think. On Wednesday's visit the review framework was raised. With each of the reviews staff were surveyed to ask them: "How was it for you?" You will know that in the pilot period we did not because it was a pilot methodology to develop the whole framework. We did not ask parents. We have started that now, so the live review last week, we had positive

feedback from staff and parents told us what they thought about their child's school, or children's if they had more than one child in the school. Is anxiety and stress of itself a good thing? No, certainly not, if it impairs one's work. There is evidence that a certain amount of stress helps us function well, but I am no particular expert. But there are other audiences than just the teachers. It is right that children and young people know how good their school is. It is right that parents know. It is right that we spend public money so we are moving into a period of openly and transparently telling the Island of Jersey how well our school is doing.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

I am pleased we have had this discussion because the concerns that we have raised are real, but that does not mean that we are saying that the review system is not there for any purpose; that is not it at all. It is just being very, very aware of these things. I myself went through the very early days of Ofsted and that was absolutely horrific, the stress in the school was unbelievable - many years ago now, admittedly - but we do not want to go down that line and we have learned from the past and we just want to make sure that staff are looked after.

The Minister for Education:

Just to make a point, Chair, I was extremely worried about this review framework and I went through it with a very fine-tooth comb, made some changes to the handbook, the framework, because the language needed to show what the intention was. My real concern was saying we are basically bringing an Ofsted. We could have saved a lot of money, a lot of time, a lot of effort by just going to the U.K. (United Kingdom) and going: "Let us get Ofsted in." But there is no way that I wanted that type of experience for not just teachers, but the children as well. We have to look around the world at some of the really, really good education systems and it comes back to that culture and we have to make sure that culture is right. If I make it clear here now the intention was never to have an Ofsted-type inspection. That is why we believe in the peer reviewing and one of the crucial things about our role, Education's role, is relationships and communication and people need to feel like they can feed back openly and honestly to us so that we can address these issues. We cannot be in every school every day, so having that feedback enables us to look at it. We are not going to get everything right first time, this will be an ongoing: "How can we improve? How can we do better?" But there are issues with this, there are issues with autonomy and there are issues with governance in terms of the education system, but that is why we are looking at the law, that is why we are looking at the school funding. This term is fundamentally about trying to create the right foundation and we can only improve on this by doing those things as well alongside that.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Just one final thing, you do not grade lessons during this review, Ofsted do not grade lessons anymore, it is more informative feedback from lessons now?

Group Director of Education:

There is no individual lesson grading; there is no numeric gradings; there is no overall number of a school, because schools are far more complex than that. Schools will have real strengths in some areas and development needs in others, so we have not gone for that reductionist approach.

The Deputy of St. Peter:

You have been talking about positive feedback. Have you had any negative feedback? Has this unearthed any major causes for concern?

The Minister for Education:

The one thing that worries me a little bit is of course the workload issue that we regularly speak about that we regularly talk about at the E.C.C. (Education Consultative Council). We meet regularly with the teaching unions every quarter and they feed back to us and we work with them to try to assist in terms of the issues that they flag up on a regular basis. One of the things that I am aware of, and was raised with me on Wednesday directly by teachers, was their concern around the planning guidance, the workload that they are facing, and that was strongly put across by teachers when I went to see them. So we have more work to do on that; we have to improve on that.

The Deputy of St. Peter:

That is a recurring theme. Would you put that in the camp of a major cause for concern?

The Minister for Education:

I think so. It comes back to this point where you have, whether it is culture or whether there is duplication within that paperwork or how certain schools are working in terms of being able to implement all of the curriculum. That is one of the big issues as well, the curriculum has been enhanced significantly over the last few years, but particularly in the last year, and that is creating also extra workload, trying to fit all of that into the school day is causing problems. Nothing is going to be perfect, but we do need to address that and that is why we have the regular E.C.C. meetings with the unions. We are due to have one soon, which I am sure they will flag up these issues.

The Deputy of St. Peter:

Workload is going in the wrong direction.

The Minister for Education:

Sorry?

The Deputy of St. Peter:

The curriculum is getting bigger and the workload is getting greater and that is the number one concern that teachers are saying to you is about workload.

The Minister for Education:

That is what I have heard very strongly. There are probably other issues that Seán has heard.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Could I ask the Minister one quick question?

The Deputy of St. Peter:

Could I carry on?

Deputy R.J. Ward:

It is related. What do you think the average working week for a teacher is in hours?

The Minister for Education:

Probably 60 roughly.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Just so we have a context.

The Minister for Education:

That is what I am hearing; that is what I am understanding, roughly 60 hours.

Director, Policy and Planning:

Can I just come in? I know this is an item that you would like to discuss later on in terms of the teachers' survey, which has just been released. We do specifically ask about number of hours, so in terms of answering the question that you posed we are going to be in a lot better position to be able to do that because we are asking teachers, in a list of tasks, to define the amount of time that they spend on those. Also in terms of workload, which has been a theme with the teachers' survey, number one and number 2 and now number 3 also, the staff wellbeing in general, this does show the Minister's commitment here by asking the questions and refining them further to give us that kind of rich response. I am sure you will want to know what do we do with that information when we get it. In terms of the progression to try to find out and get a deeper understanding about the impact

of all the things that you suggest, we are in a good place with the teachers' survey, which has just been released.

The Deputy of St. Peter:

The concern is it is not the questions you are asking and it is not the answers you are getting, it is the answers you are not getting, and that is the culture that is just not here, it is very standard in all walks of life, and so how are you going to ensure you will get to unearth the questions that are not being answered and the issues that are not being flagged up?

The Minister for Education:

That is a pretty difficult question to answer because how do you do that? If you do not know, how do you address the issues? We need to be more open and transparent, we need to engage and we need to ensure that people feel like they can communicate with us. Seán regularly gets contact from teachers and parents, and I do as well, I get emails constantly from people. But there is a certain amount of fear, and it is not just in Education, I think it is across the public sector, that fear of coming forward.

The Deputy of St. Peter:

It is a bigger question than just Education, yes.

The Deputy of St. John:

That fear is about the relationship, generally speaking, with your senior, is it not, what the repercussions of saying certain things are going to be. We have it on authority that not all head teachers are giving people the link to answer the questionnaire online, but insisting that people collect the questionnaire from the head teacher and deliver it back to the head teacher. There is built in there a concern on the part of the person filling it in, surely. That is what we have heard.

Group Director of Education:

Perhaps outside the meeting if Deputy Pointon would share that with me. That would gravely concern me. I would not presume to claim we get it right, but here we go, the default position of the department under the Minister and all of the Education workforce, the leadership in the department and in schools, is to actively - proactively - ask the question. At the end of every single pilot review we asked all staff: "What did you think?" After every C.P.D. (continuing professional development) training event, we have 150 pages worth of training offered in the department for our inclusion S.E.N. (special educational needs) colleagues, our teaching and learning colleagues, early years colleagues.

[10:30]

We ask the: “How was it for you?” question. We meet regularly half-term with the unions through the E.C.C. The phone goes morning, noon and night from union leads and concerned members. We have talked very recently, not just to individual parents, but representative groups, be they Mind Jersey, Autism Jersey, other groups, to actively listen and solve the problems. If there are things that people are choosing not to tell us and we do not know that they are not telling us, I think it is a conundrum.

The Deputy of St. Peter:

I would not expect names or rank or schools, but I am concerned that you have not had any feedback over and above the workload from the teachers in this Island. I have said what my view is in the Assembly, if you work in Jersey you tend to be subjugated to your job and that is not a reflection of the education job itself, but you tend to be locked in this little Island and therefore you tend not to upset the applecart by any of your challenges. Because I said it in the Assembly, if you work in London and you decide you want to go and work for a different school or you get a better opportunity, the only difference it means to your family is you turn left outside of your front door instead of right outside your front door to go to a different destination. We do not have that here so people tend to be more enclosed, they keep their thoughts to themselves, and I am just wondering if we can suggest to you some creative thinking to unearth and unlock those concerns from our teachers. It is a big subject, by the way, it is beyond just Education.

The Minister for Education:

To be fair, I did say the one thing that jumps out at me was the workload. Seán knows of plenty, it is not like we are hiding under a rock somewhere and we are not talking to people, we are going out and speaking to people on a regular basis. Like I said, we were in First Tower School on Wednesday speaking to teachers and the head teacher, so getting proper feedback. It is not me going around the schools and doing that: “Oh look, it is all nice,” taking a photo, the Minister is out. I only want to go into that school because I want to hear what is going on on the ground in that school, so I understand first-hand what the issues are. It does concern me if people do not feel like they can speak up, but I can guarantee you on Wednesday they were not shy in coming forward.

The Deputy of St. Peter:

I have a heading here: “Independent school funding review” and I found out that is an independent funding review of schools as opposed to the other way around. At the last public hearing you talked about appointing a reviewer from one of the jurisdictions other than England. Has an independent reviewer now been appointed and can you share that information publicly?

The Minister for Education:

Yes, so an independent reviewer has been appointed. We are in week 3 with them now. That organisation that are undertaking that review are 2020 Delivery Limited.

The Deputy of St. Peter:

Is that the year or the vision?

Group Director of Education:

I think the 2020 is the clarity. I do not think in a year and 4 weeks when we are in 2021 they are out of date. They are not 20th Century Fox. No, it is 2020 vision, yes.

The Minister for Education:

That is the organisation. They are in week 3 now, we have signed the contract, Ministerial Decision due to go out shortly, I believe, or is it already out? It is out. They are currently moving to the end of the first phase, which is reviewing the current state of our funding in education and the next phase will be to test the options.

The Deputy of St. Peter:

Can we see the terms of reference for 2020?

The Minister for Education:

I thought we had sent you the documentation.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

We may well have been sent the documentation, but we have had a lot of documentation recently.

Director, Policy and Planning:

I think it was only the initial required spec, but we will just double-check.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

We have had an initial communication, but it went directly to me rather than through Scrutiny, so we just need to go through Scrutiny officers.

The Minister for Education:

I can briefly give you the scope of work now. Their scope of work was to complete the current review of secondary school funding formula; the appraisal of the work with S.E.N. funding in mainstream

education; broaden the school funding formula review to include primary school education; broaden the school funding formula review to include special schools and additional and alternative provision currently not funded through the formula that we have at the moment, so review of 16 to 18 school and college funding in the context of existing sixth form provision and ministerial plans to consider the extension of school participation age to 18 years; review expenditure of staffing and non-staffing costs, the headroom to ensure an optimum use of funding in schools; review current resource provision for Jersey Premium, English as an additional language, and other targeted funding streams; a review of grant funding to the Government and private fee-paying sector as currently structured assessing the equity of funding for single-sex schools; review of the efficacy of introducing a 3-plus year school budget planning cycle and the impact of the disjoin between the academic and financial years; a longer-term analysis of funding for a potential non-selective school system.

The Deputy of St. Peter:

When will that be delivered?

The Minister for Education:

The report or everything?

The Deputy of St. Peter:

Can we start with the report?

The Minister for Education:

I will just say I am thoroughly impressed with the team so far, 3 weeks presenting me with what they have done so far and they are really getting into it and understanding it and working closely with stakeholders throughout, so I am really hopeful for this. But the report they are expecting to produce by the end of January to me and at that point it will be for me to then consider that and luckily, at the same time, we will have the outcomes from the Big Education Conversation, so it will enable me to use those options to test how we can move forward in terms of funding, but also our educational system as a whole.

The Deputy of St. Peter:

Is there anything within their briefing that could be restrictive or have they been given a blank sheet of paper to sort of start from the ground up with the funding of education?

The Minister for Education:

I have not been backwards in coming forward, I have sat there and I have said we need to understand what our funding system looks like at the moment in terms of our education system,

recognising that the formula was done last time in 1993 and the demographics and the demand have changed significantly since then. We need to be open and transparent about whether we are underfunding them or overfunding, because that review will identify it, but from the information I have seen from work that has been done within the department beforehand, there appears to be some significant overspends in some areas because we are not funding it properly and that is just from what I have seen within the department. But I basically said I want to know what the true cost of education in Jersey is and in order for me to see the true cost of education is being able to look at everything and saying: "Here it is on a plate" and then for me to be able to say what is the right decision to move forward in order to provide the best educational system for our children and young people.

The Deputy of St. Peter:

Are they also being asked to look at the split between the independent schools, which are part-funded by the States of Jersey?

The Minister for Education:

Yes, that was the last point I mentioned.

The Deputy of St. Peter:

I was trying to listen to every word.

The Minister for Education:

So the review of grant funding to the Government and private fee-paying sector, as currently structured, assessing the equity of funding for single-sex schools.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Just to ask, when do you think we will see any tangible change from that? Without pre-empting anything that one might say - and I would say it - is hopelessly underfunded, when may we see some change? Within a year, 2 years, a year and a half?

The Minister for Education:

You will see in the Government Plan I have asked the Council of Ministers to support me in the fact that should this review come forward and say that our schools, as they currently stand, are underfunded that we will identify monies to support them from September 2020.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

I will say as a Scrutiny Panel as well we have recommended that any monies that come from a decrease in tuition fees in the U.K., which looks likely after the election, should be channelled directly and to stay in Education so we would support you in that.

The Deputy of St. John:

Going to change tack to post-16. We produced a review into post-16 education earlier in the year and, Minister, you responded by saying that you would be publishing the findings of your strategic vision for post-16 education and that would be produced in the third quarter of this year and would be presented in time for the Government Plan debate. We have not seen that yet, have we?

The Minister for Education:

No, and I can only apologise, but I will hand over to Jeremy, if that is okay, and he can give an explanation why. So I can only apologise for that, but we have had some staff illness and out of scope so that is why it is slightly delayed, but I will ask Jeremy to apologise.

Assistant Minister for Education:

Thank you. We have produced ...

Director of Young People, Further Education, Skills and Learning:

If I can clarify, it is not that what we promised has not been delivered. The strategic vision that was part of the consultation resulted in the post-16 strategy document that from it came 10 different working titles of workstreams that we are working on. The document was late in being published, but that was published on 10th October and that is public, it is on the Government website. What we are working on is in that document there is an annex that outlines what are the 10 key themes and workstreams that the strategy will be working on. There is a timeline for every one of those. We will be intending and endeavouring and delivering on those strategic areas. In some of those key workstreams there are multiple projects that are coming out and there is a prioritisation to be given. As you know, when we went out for consultation, the view was that the post-16 strategic vision would not be a short-term strategic vision, it would be long term, and some of the indications and workstreams that it has outlined as part of the document would lead into first to look at up to 10 to 15 years as to what changes need to happen for post-16 strategy to be looked at. But I can highlight there are 3 key projects that under those workstreams will be immediately looked at and you will see delivery of those as promised, so one of those is linked with what we just talked about, which is the review of the funding for post-16, and that includes the review of the financing for students that would go to higher education. We are scoping that and making sure that we do not just look at what currently student finance is funding, looking at higher apprenticeship, looking at potential creation of a Jersey 5, if I can put it at levels, that is provision that we look at, working much

closer with employers and providing vocational and technical education that is at a higher level, as well as looking at provision that is skills-based, but do not have a qualification at the higher education level. So that is one of the key workstreams that is coming out. We are also looking at how we can make sure that students that we fund through the student finance who could go and study in the U.K., how can we entice them and utilise their knowledge and energy that they gain when they do their studies to come back from the U.K., so that is another workstream that we will be working on. That is a cross-departmental project, which works with the Migration Development Policy Group and will work with Education and will also work with businesses and communities. Another workstream that is high on our agenda is about making sure that we would map the skillsets that are required by community and by business against the provision that is available for meeting those demands and how those demands are met in terms of delivery - is it Government-funded, is it Government-supported, is it privately done - and how can we make sure that from the work that we have done as part of the delivery of the consultation, we would capture that and create a map that would then guide us in terms of development and refreshment of the curriculum at Highlands College as a key deliverer for technical and vocational education and look at development of the higher education on Island.

The Deputy of St. John:

Can I stop you there? You talked about long-term changes, long-term developments. What are the developments that are going to result over the next year?

Director of Young People, Further Education, Skills and Learning:

Over the next year you definitely will see a proposal for a new funding model for post-16 education as part of what is overall looked at as a new framework for funding for education as a whole. We will definitely look at a refresh of the curriculum in line with the demands that we have identified.

[10:45]

You will definitely see us refreshing the critical subject areas and decisions that need to be made in terms of how and what prioritisation will be put against provision that the Government needs to fund.

The Deputy of St. John:

So flash to bang is not going to be way down the line, we are going to see some results next year?

Director of Young People, Further Education, Skills and Learning:

Absolutely, so by the end of this quarter 1 you will see the proposal for how we are going to encourage some of our either graduates or those who are studying to come back to Jersey and work

for matters that are important to Jersey. As part of the strategic plan you will see that we outlined one of our key strategic objectives to be to creating a community for research and we would like to encourage those who are studying in higher education to take matters that are important to Jersey as subjects for their thesis, as subjects for their Master's programmes, and we are working with universities like U.C.L. (University College London), like Cambridge, like Oxford, top universities in the U.K. where our kids are studying at, and trying to get projects that they would be able to work on, which would make them more inclined to come back and see the results of what they studied in higher education taking shape as a policy for the future of the young people in Jersey.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Can I just ask a quick question? You mentioned in there ... you said T-levels, I was not sure whether you said you would be considering them.

Director of Young People, Further Education, Skills and Learning:

Not purely. Yes, I did mention that, sorry. So T-levels, as you are very well aware, Chair, it is a project that the U.K. is looking at bringing about to try to bridge the gap between those who would require in business for employees who would have higher-level skillsets, but do not necessarily need to have a degree level that would be a traditional degree. They would be like applied knowledge, applied in business, and directly impacting on the bottom line of any business who would employ people.

The Deputy of St. John:

My understanding is that T-levels are only being considered in England and not in Wales or Scotland.

Director of Young People, Further Education, Skills and Learning:

They are, and that is what I am suggesting here. I am not suggesting we are going to go and bring what T-levels are in England to Jersey. What we are doing - and we have started doing this - is working with industry to say: "What are the high-level skills that you need? Could we create either apprenticeship programmes or a T-level equivalent qualification that would be for Jersey, which is accredited and understood and has the educational currency for it to be transferable if they want to continue their education?" We will be looking at that for Jersey.

The Deputy of St. John:

Is there not a concern perhaps that if we design it entirely to suit the Jersey environment that all these T-levels may not be transferable to England or to Wales or Scotland?

Director of Young People, Further Education, Skills and Learning:

It is within our gift what we design. As part of the specification, it would be that educational currency and validity, not just to England, to anywhere else. Part of the work that I am doing currently on the Brexit Committee is about how do we make sure that there is that assessment of validation of qualifications that are from different jurisdictions, not U.K., would be able to be used in Jersey or vice versa. If we have a qualification here, how can that be transferred?

The Deputy of St. John:

I am very pleased we have managed to avoid the B word until three-quarters of an hour into the meeting.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

I thought T-levels were technical A-levels and I think you are talking more about the old equivalent H.N.D.s (Higher National Diploma) and that level 4 and 5 area that goes between degree, is it not, where there is a shortage?

Director of Young People, Further Education, Skills and Learning:

A T-level, as I said, in U.K. and in England, what they are looking at is trying to bring about qualifications that would be giving young people who graduate from the high school at the age of 18 different pathways that they can follow. What we would like to do is to look at that and see what are the gaps in the businesses that operate and the demands in Jersey and would that be something that we need to look at and create. The skills that those who take part in this provision would achieve in order to be able to fill the skills gap in a community or in a business, whatever level that would be, it can be at the level 3, which is A-level, or it can be further than that, which is 4, 5 and 6, which is equivalent to a degree.

The Deputy of St. Peter:

There is a clear hole in industry over here of I.T. (information technology) skills, on and off-Island. It is global. I think there is worldwide something like 130,000 security analysts required. What are we doing here to ensure that we are not behind the curve, or certainly up with the curve of the development of skills in this Island?

Assistant Minister for Education:

I had a few months ago the privilege of opening the Digital Academy, which of course we have now taken on under our umbrella to work along with and to complement the work that is done at Highlands College around the development of digital skills within the Island, so it is certainly something that the Government of Jersey is committed to. We have put in a significant amount of

money behind that. We did have an issue around the accreditation of the course, but I think that has been tackled or it is being tackled?

Director of Young People, Further Education, Skills and Learning:

What we would like to do again, as I explained, when we looked at the Digital Academy and the provision that would be delivered from that, it was clear that the employers would like the people who would enter the job market to have the skillset that they want and that did not necessarily mean studying on single track qualifications that would give them an I.T. qualification at the end of it. They wanted to have leadership on digital ability to do a multitude of activities that would be around the digital world and therefore the provision that is being delivered from Digital Jersey is at the level 6, which is a degree level. It is going through accreditation for it to get on the listing of the courses that are accredited at the degree level and up to now we have not put that qualification to be funded by the student finance, which only fund accredited and known degree qualifications. So what we are doing at this moment in time is to make sure that we would use this pilot as a way of us making sure that we meet the needs of the employers who require a skillset that does not necessarily fit within an agreed and current degree programme, but we will get the power to be able to accredit it.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Digital Jersey is now under the umbrella of Skills Jersey?

The Minister for Education:

The Digital Academy is under the umbrella of Skills and Education; the Digital Jersey stays in Economic Development.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Therefore, if their course at Digital Jersey is accredited then it could be funded by our higher education funding for those students?

Director of Young People, Further Education, Skills and Learning:

Any provision that will be on the list of accredited degree provision, as the current order stands, is fundable by the student finance.

The Deputy of St. Peter:

What is being done at ground level upwards to promote the fact that a career in the digital world, which is a very big world, is something that is to be aspired to?

The Minister for Education:

When you mean ground up, do you mean in schools?

The Deputy of St. Peter:

Just talking about even the introduction of the skills at primary schools.

Assistant Minister for Education:

I would say a lot, but it is not just the digital sector, I suppose. Of course the important work that we have had, the skills show that went on last month, that was a great success and we had a huge amount there. That of course was mainly secondary school children but of course we had a lot of working old-age people going around and that of course included the digital sector. But what was important as well this time, which we really pushed for, is that a lot of the parents came back with their children to understand more about the opportunities about not just the digital sector, but about all the ones. It shows in a way what we really want to do is to address the barriers and stereotypes that certain parents might have about various industries that were there because we would argue that a lot of the routes which may or may not be chosen, the parents have a significant influence on that and therefore if we can address perhaps some of the perceptions that the parents have of course that then opens up the abilities of the students to take different pathways. I think that is really important just to mention. But as for what is going on in the schools, Saboohi also. Who would like to go?

Director of Young People, Further Education, Skills and Learning:

There is a specific piece of work being carried out as a result of the work that is done in Skills Jersey under the digital and innovation lead, programmes like Design Engineer Construct, looking at the engineering programme that is rolled out in primary schools. We had a very successful first-year engagement with the engineering programme where we had all primary schools encouraged to take part in a global competition and it went from nursery all the way ...

Deputy R.J. Ward:

I do not want to interrupt, but we get an awful lot of information about different projects and we know they are going on, but one of the key things from our review was talking about I.T. should be explored as a compulsory subject or subjects in key stage 4. Has any progress been made on that?

Assistant Minister for Education:

So that would be wrapped up under the review of the Education Law, which is still in its early phases, which still has to result from the conclusion of the Big Education Conversation. So it is part of the mix but we have ...

Deputy R.J. Ward:

So will you have to change the law in order to make I.T. compulsory in schools; you cannot just decide that will be the case?

The Minister for Education:

No, I believe we can do it through the E.C.C. But we did state that we would consider what comes back in terms of the education conversation before determining whether to. One of the issues with making something compulsory, one of the feedback in terms of the digital space is if you are learning something, and we know how changeable technology and the world of technology is, the time it takes to learn it, by the time you finish it it is out of date, and that is the risk that we have. So if we are going to make something compulsory we want to make sure it is worthwhile.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

We do need to move on just because we are running out of time. In terms of Jersey Progression Qualification, when we talk about qualifications that are transferable, and thank you for your response to a letter requesting further information about the J.P.Q. (Jersey Progression Qualification), it explained that the benchmark at level 2 is a replacement terminology for G.C.S.E. (General Certificate of Secondary Education) equivalent and the J.P.Q. is regulated by the N.C.F.E. (Northern Council for Further Education). Can you clarify what a level 2 tells if it is not a G.C.S.E. equivalent qualification?

Assistant Minister for Education:

I think at this time if we could invite the acting principal of Highlands College to join us.

Acting Principal, Highlands College:

In relation to the J.P.Q., in the sense that we are talking about it being benchmarked, so at a national level it is equivalent in demand to level 2, similar to a G.C.S.E. It is not the same as a G.C.S.E. because the assessment regulations are different, so the changes that were brought in by Michael Gove brought in a lot more external assessment and examinations at level 2. That would not be suitable for a vocational qualification. This vocational qualification has a lot more practical timed assessment so the students acquire the practical vocational skills to go out into the industry, so that is why it is not the same as a G.C.S.E. although it is at the same level.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

So would it be recognised anywhere other than Jersey?

Acting Principal, Highlands College:

Yes, it is. We have students that have gone to further education colleges in the U.K., we have people move outside of the Island and have also moved directly into industry from our automotive provision, for example, who have been employed and moved on and progressed. What we always look at is impact, so we look at the impact of the qualification on the student's achievement, progression into further study and/or employment, and we know from the J.P.Q. that their progression on to advanced study is fantastic. We also look at it in line of different strands, students who are on the J.P.Q. who have S.E.N., who are in receipt of the Jersey Premium, all sorts of aspects of those learners, and we drill down and we say: "How well are they doing? How well are they progressing into employment? How well are they progressing on to advanced study?" The statistics, and I have them here now, 72 per cent of the students who progressed from the J.P.Q. are performing as good or better than students who progressed straight in from school. The thing about the J.P.Q., I will just say very quickly in summary, what it does is in its title, it is about progressing students to higher-level achievement. It is not an end result in itself.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

So it is not a standalone qualification?

[11:00]

Acting Principal, Highlands College:

It is a standalone qualification because it is an official award by N.C.F.E., which is the third-largest awarding body in the U.K. - it might be the second now - and it is a standalone qualification. But we do not deliver it as standalone; they also do re-take English, re-take mathematics, they have an enrichment provision, so they have a whole study programme that wraps around it. If it was on its own it would not be as successful. We were talking about Ofsted earlier and some things that have come out of Ofsted I agree with and some things I do not, but a recent review into the curriculum in the U.K., the study that they have done is outstanding where they focused very much on the quality of the curriculum. The J.P.Q., if you look at the studies that have come out of Ofsted, it has all the elements, which indicate high-quality curriculum.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

The pass rate of the qualification is very high, 94, 96 and 95 per cent from the letter that we were sent. It is higher than the U.K. Can I ask you, the populations of those taking the qualification with the U.K., are they comparable? For example, it is a level 2 qualification for those who are post-16 and so if you would say: "I need a bit of paper and a classic" you have your normal reference curve,

you would have the population taking it really being at this end of the curve, whereas in the U.K. it might be a wider curve, but still our qualification here has got a higher pass rate than the U.K.

Acting Principal, Highlands College:

Yes. What we look at is we use national systems for value added, for example, we are looking at the entry level of the students and the progress that they make and we measure that progress. If you look at the outcomes at the college for apprenticeships, for degrees, for level 3, we are performing at the top 25 per cent of any colleges in the United Kingdom. What I am saying, the quality of the teaching and learning at the college is high, and that is demonstrable in results and all sorts of reviews, so our J.P.Q. students are outperforming students in the U.K., but then most of our students are outperforming students in the U.K. right up to degree level.

Assistant Minister for Education:

But if I understood the Chair correctly ...

Acting Principal, Highlands College:

Okay, sorry.

Assistant Minister for Education:

... he was asking about the cohort that you have got to deal with compared to the cohort that a U.K. standard U.K. college is dealing with. Effectively are you dealing with students with perhaps a greater level of needs then compared to normal or ...

Acting Principal, Highlands College:

Yes. Indeed, yes.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

So you are dealing with students with perhaps less academic achievement - when I say "academic achievement" it does mean achievement, I absolutely understand that ...

Acting Principal, Highlands College:

No, that is true. Yes.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

... also with greater need and perhaps less provision with that need, but they are still quite significantly outperforming the U.K. by 10 per cent in terms of their pass rate. Does that not ...

Assistant Minister for Education:

It should be something we celebrate. We should be celebrating, Chair.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

I absolutely understand that, as long as ... but it is not equivalent to G.C.S.E. in the U.K., it is a different type of qualification. I think it does ring some alarm bells in terms of the validity of that outcome.

The Deputy of St. John:

Something I heard earlier on was that Highlands are producing a level 3 qualification that is equivalent to A-level. That was quite definitely the statement, equivalent to A-level. What is a level 2 qualification if it is not equivalent to G.C.S.E.?

Director of Young People, Further Education, Skills and Learning:

It is. If I may, in terms of various pathways, you have the academic pathway that the qualifications would be classed at the level and they will have a different title, so they have G.C.S.E.s and A-levels. Equivalent on the other side, you have all qualifications that could be awarded by an awarding body accredited at the level that is the same as G.C.S.E. If you look at B.T.E.C. (Business and Technology Education Council) qualifications, that would produce a level 2 and a level 3. You will have the same equivalence.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Yes, but this qualification is not equivalent to G.C.S.E. We have been told that; you have been told that.

Director of Young People, Further Education, Skills and Learning:

But it is the same. In terms of equivalency, it is not the same as G.C.S.E., but it is at the same level as G.C.S.E. and that is what we have said throughout. The difference ...

Deputy R.J. Ward:

It is benchmarked to level 2.

Director of Young People, Further Education, Skills and Learning:

... which is the same as when you have B.T.E.C. level 2 benchmark. The difference is that if you were looking at the G.C.S.E. or at the B.T.E.C. that there would be an element of external examination, which this provision does not have. That is what the main difference is between the J.P.Q. and if there was an equivalency, let us say, at a national grade.

Acting Principal, Highlands College:

I suppose what I think your concern is, and I understand it, is the qualification too easy? Well, if it was, they would not be performing so well at level 3, which are absolutely equivalent national qualifications. Do you see what I mean? So they are outperforming students who come direct entry from schools, so they would not be progressing. If somehow it was not at the right standard, then when they went on to advanced level or apprenticeships ...

Deputy R.J. Ward:

But you would not have that data yet because the first cohort to come through will be 2016 to 2017 from level 2.

Acting Principal, Highlands College:

Yes.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

So 2018-19, 2019-20 will be this year's results have shown that level 3 are above the U.K. from that cohort that came through from that J.P.Q.

Acting Principal, Highlands College:

We do not just track end of year, we track in-year against the new ALPs Connect programme that has just come out. It does tracking virtually in real time against national standards. So you have got that the cohort that went through in 2016 and 2017. We know exactly how they are performing in real time against all the modules against national standards. What we also have with the J.P.Q. and with the ALPs, if we have external verifiers coming in all the time assessing and checking the work ...

Deputy R.J. Ward:

But those level 3 qualifications have more external assessment, do they not, in the final assessment, which is not in the J.P.Q., so are you certain that that performance will happen at the end, given the different type of assessment that they will be prepared for in the end?

Acting Principal, Highlands College:

We check those indicators all the time. At senior leadership team 2 weeks ago - and I have got some of the projections here, which I can share with you - we were looking at level 3, year 1 real-time projections for what they are currently achieving and looking forward, and that was only the week before last, so we know. We have got a lot of confidence in the quality and the progress they

are making. We also have a quality board that operates every month in the college, which is reviewing the progress of all the students across all the areas constantly.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

So the move from this J.P.Q. at level 2, even though it is not equivalent to G.C.S.E. and there is a different form of assessment - which I understand and I do not have a problem with at all, to be quite frank - so level 3 equivalent, which currently is B.T.E.C. before you develop a qualification for the college, you are saying that that progression is continuing?

Acting Principal, Highlands College:

It is, absolutely.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

So what you are doing is you are taking perhaps the least able cohort of our population and you are moving them through to level 3 and they are having achievement at the equivalent of the average population in the U.K.?

Acting Principal, Highlands College:

Equivalent and better, yes.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

That is remarkable.

Acting Principal, Highlands College:

We are constantly checking it. Also we have got a curriculum review panel that runs every half-term, and if a curriculum leader or a head of department was to come to us and say to us: "We think in this area we need to do something different" and there is a business case and an evidence base put in, we would look at that at the senior leadership team. It is under constant ... please let me reassure you it is under constant review.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

You understand why we ask, because ...

Acting Principal, Highlands College:

Absolutely, yes.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

... we have to be absolutely certain. It is quite a remarkable performance.

Acting Principal, Highlands College:

It is, yes. It is a success story.

The Minister for Education:

It is something we should be celebrating.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Yes, absolutely, as long as ...

Acting Principal, Highlands College:

I welcome the scrutiny and the questions, really.

The Minister for Education:

Yes, but the important point to make is that there is a perception out there about Highlands and Hautlieu and all those things. This just goes to show how great our teachers, our lecturers, our people are in terms of progression. It is not just about that grade, it is about that progression of that individual and we should absolutely be celebrating it.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

They definitely deserve the pay raise. Do you want to take next bit yourself?

The Deputy of St. Peter:

We alluded to that. Shall we move on, in the interests of time? I am not sure we are going to ...

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Yes, absolutely. There were some questions at the public hearing in June. We talked about verbal and physical abuse of teachers and recording of incidents and you talked about the use of S.I.M.S. (School Information Management System) and you told us that you were formalising that process. What headway has been made in that formalisation of the use of S.I.M.S. in schools to record such incidents and their outcomes, more importantly?

Group Director of Education:

Thank you. S.I.M.S. is our management information system that was reintroduced in Jersey. I think Jersey had it for a long time and then 15 years of a system called CMIS (College/School Management Information System), so it has a function, as we discussed in June, where we record

various types of abuse, verbal abuse, physical abuse, as it is more serious. What we found and reported to you was that that was inconsistently applied, so our head of the insight team, the statistics lead, who works under Keith, has shared and disseminated to all the schools, so we are more confident now we are getting more consistent, accurate reporting. We did share, I believe in June, or if not ... that while S.I.M.S. has the functionality to share where there is poor behaviour from pupil to pupil or pupil to staff member, where there might be challenge to our staff from other adults - parents, carers or whatever - that was not recorded, so we set up ... S.I.M.S. can do most things, but it could not do that thing, so we set up our own reporting, so we get monthly updates again from our excellent data team on abuse against staff, support staff or teaching staff, so we have got that record, but it is out with S.I.M.S.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Do you have any concern about any trends or the analysis of that data? Obviously any incident of abuse of staff is a concern. Are you seeing an increasing number, a change in it?

The Minister for Education:

I do not think it is just abuse of staff though, I think it is children as well. It is recognising ... because we do record that as well as assaults on students and verbal abuse towards students. I mean, in terms of analysis I do not know whether Keith, you have any information on ...

Director, Policy and Planning:

The only thing I would say, Chair, is that I think this is one area where our data is improving, so I think when we look back at trends, I think if we went previously back it is about the quality, it is about the ability to record, but it is also the quality. I think we are getting to a position towards the end of this year now that we will be able to see a trend with consistent data within it. So from the technical point of view, I think we are there. We have just got to make sure that concerns are recorded. That is the other thing, that it is not seen as an administrative burden to go and record this, because if we do not get the data and we are not happy that the data is correct, it is very difficult then to plan based on the trends that we see. What we are seeing, I think, in this academic year is a consistent application of the use of S.I.M.S. for recording this information. That is good. I think it is too early to see if there is a trend. I think that will probably be coming in the next quarter. We will get to see, because we will be comparing like for like data, but we have to continue our work with schools through the different forum that we have to make sure that these are recorded. That is important.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

For example, one of the things about impact on other children in the classroom when there is particular behavioural challenge, particularly when we have such a selective education system,

where - let us be absolutely frank about it - the majority of the really challenging behaviour does tend to get focused in particular for 11 to 16 schools and it is a real challenge for staff there to deliver.

The Minister for Education:

It is not just 11 to 16, there is in primary schools.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Primary schools, of course, yes.

The Minister for Education:

We have a problem, we do, and I am not going to beat around the bush or try and hide from it. We do have some really demanding issues in our schools when it comes to behaviour, emotional and mental health, and we should be doing something about it. We are trying to achieve that by ... so there is a number of workstreams that are going on across the piece, but I flagged this up at the highest level with the Chief Executive of the States. We are now putting in place a political oversight group to oversee the work that is being carried out by the senior team. When I say "political oversight group", this is not a review board or anything like that, it is just to make sure that there is consistent communication flow between the politicians and the Executive to make sure things are being done. That will be working with my fellow Ministers, so the Minister for Children, the Minister for Social Security and the Minister for Health, because this kind of flags right across the piece. By working together in that way, we will be able to make sure there is no duplication, but make sure that we are putting the right things in rather than coming up with just one-off schemes that may do the trick just for a little bit, but not necessarily deal with the issue.

[11:15]

But there are a number and series of issues that we have in the schools. At the moment, through our Director General - and our Group Director will confirm this - at the moment we are dealing on a case to case basis, which is not the best scenario and it does not assist in terms of producing the appropriate outcomes for both our teachers and our young students.

The Deputy of St. John:

You have now the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service within your remit. How closely are they working with Education and with this difficulty that you are telling us about?

The Minister for Education:

C.A.M.H.S. (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service) is not under my remit as Minister for Education. It is part of Children, Young People, Education and Skills. I can get the feedback from the Director General, who is overlooking all of those areas and implementing those things, but I think one of the big losses at the moment is that we do not have a Director of Inclusion. We have got an inclusion team under Education and this was built up over the years in order to provide that early intervention, to put the support in for schools for S.E.N., for social, emotional and mental health, all those types of things where this team supports and helps the schools and put in place your counsellors, your primary care support workers, your educational psychologists that we have there. That has always been separate from that C.A.M.H.S. piece. C.A.M.H.S. is the place that you do not want people ending up in, really. I mean, that is where we should be going and that is how we should be working, but there is a piece of work being done - and I do not know the title or this person's name, so I am not going to say their name in public scrutiny - around the Right Help, Right Time and looking at how the crossover in terms of that early intervention piece in terms of the inclusion and working in terms of the C.A.M.H.S. piece. You want to be able to intervene at the right time so they do not end up on your level 3, level 4 in C.A.M.H.S.

The Deputy of St. John:

I think it is a question for another group.

The Minister for Education:

I can go back and ask the Director General to submit formally the work that is going on in terms of working with C.A.M.H.S.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

I think we have got a pathway for that, yes.

The Deputy of St. John:

So you are having this education conversation, the Big Education Conversation?

The Minister for Education:

Yes.

The Deputy of St. John:

Without trying to pre-empt outcomes, how is it going and what are you getting from it so far? How is this meshing in with the independent school review?

The Minister for Education:

The Big Education Conversation is going really well. The team that are behind this that sit in S.P.P.P. (Strategic Policy, Performance and Population), whatever it is called. I try to move away from the acronyms but then I forget what they are. But the Big Education Conversation is being run by the policy principal there and they are going out and speaking to all the stakeholders on a regular basis. In actual fact, they were with us at the parent carers' forum event at Les Ormes on Wednesday evening getting feedback from parents who were there and children. They have been at Highlands, they have been a multitude of places and they are doing focus groups as well to identify themes and coming back with regards to ... they are getting a lot of feedback in a variety of different ways. The first kind of tranche of information that we got back, there was nothing particularly surprising. That was pretty early on and we are due to get another update in our ministerial meeting coming up. But we do not want to pre-empt anything that comes out of that. We want to enable people to say how and what they believe education should look like.

The Deputy of St. John:

So it is a piece of work ongoing. When are we going to get the results of the ...

The Minister for Education:

Hopefully January that outcome should come through. That is why I was saying before what will be really positive from that point of view is there are 2 separate pieces of workstreams going on to make sure one does not influence the other, but then by bringing those pieces of work together, they will end up coming together at the end of January, which will give us an opportunity politically, but as a team to be able to identify and work with the Treasury and work with other Ministers to then put in proper policy options, making actual decisions, not more reviews of how we can then move forward.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

So you anticipate that it will add to other ... there is currently the school review, the independent school funding review, the post-16 review, the teachers' survey and a One Voice survey. There is an awful lot of reviews and surveys going on, so you anticipate this will all feed in together so you will end up with a huge mass of information?

The Minister for Education:

Yes.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

How would you ...

The Deputy of St. Peter:

How are you practically going to do that, consolidate all of that data and have meaningful outcomes that you can deliver on?

The Minister for Education:

That is the joy of politics, is it not? Our job is to engage and listen to what people have to say and obtain the evidence and the data that sits behind the current system that we have.

The Deputy of St. Peter:

That was not the question.

The Minister for Education:

No, but you have got the point. The point is there is going to be a huge amount of information and a huge amount of data, but we will have a big task on our hands and we have to properly listen and make sure people are heard in terms of their views in the Big Education Conversation. We have to identify the practicalities around what comes forward, because some things may not be able to happen straight away. We heard today with the new tax launch, that is a 15-year grandfathering thing because you do not want negative impacts on the taxpaying population, so you want to try and make sure that the information you get fed back and the data and evidence collected in terms of the school funding review and the surveys and those types of things can work well together, and you put in a plan, an action plan, that will phase it in in the right way so it does not have a detrimental effect.

The Deputy of St. Peter:

How will you pick up the priorities that come out of that mass of information you are going to get? How are you going to weight those against the actions that you are required to take and how are you then going to take that or who is going to ... weightings are subjective. They are very important and they have to be included and it tends to be a judgment call. How are you going to make the judgment call on what are going to be your priorities for the judgment call on those weightings that will come out of all of that information that will go towards the successful outcomes of the education of our children?

The Minister for Education:

I would imagine a large proportion of it will end up helping us formalise the education law, so that would be the primary aim at the end of the term. It is 2021 I have put a deadline to bring the Education Law to the Assembly, but there will be certain elements with that that legally I would have to come to the States Assembly, but the weighting would be the principles or the expectations of what we want to see in terms of an education system for Jersey. That will be helped to be formed

in terms of the feedback through the education conversation and that will be people, the Islanders, the very people that pay for our education system, feeding back what they want to see in terms of education for our young people and themselves ...

The Deputy of St. Peter:

More data.

The Minister for Education:

It is feedback, it is actual ... this is what we want to see. That is a principle. This is what we want to achieve. That is our vision; that is what we want to get. It is not necessarily data. Then you weight in terms of how important those principles are, you put that into policy and that guides the way that we utilise the data in order to put in the actions that need to be achieved. What I am saying is that I do not want to put in place something that would detrimentally impact Islanders, so we need to be very careful which way we do this. One part of the school funding review ... and that is why I have committed in terms of 2020, wanting the funding in place for 2020 for our current system, how it works, and then what we do in terms of policy options is how then do we cut the cake, increase the cake? That will be based on the vision, the expectations and the policy and the principles that we have, because it will end up having ... it will not just be me, it will have to go to C.O.M. (Council of Ministers) and it will ultimately have to come to the States Assembly.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

So you will get information from the Big Education Conversation obviously and all the other reviews. What if the outcomes of those are not necessarily the principles that you would necessarily want to do? Because one of the things may be, for example - just to play devil's advocate here, because it is always useful - that the public may say: "Yes, we want the best education on this planet, but we do not want to pay for it" which tends to be a trend among populations all over the world, to be quite frank: "We want the best, but we do not really want to pay for it" so you are going to have some difficult decisions to make.

The Minister for Education:

Yes.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

I just wonder whether ...

Assistant Minister for Education:

I think that is always the difficulty between being a politician, is it not? It is representing the people, but then also leading them as well. That is a political decision politicians have to make all over the world. I mean ...

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Do you have a picture in your mind of what education should be now, which is in the back of your mind and that you will consult with, your vision of education for post-16, for example?

Assistant Minister for Education:

I think we all do, but I think at the same time, not being a trained educationalist, there is also a lot of evidence which I want my mind to be open to in order to shift that as well.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

But your consultation will be mainly to people who are not trained educationalists as well.

Assistant Minister for Education:

That is why it is not just relying on that. That is why it is relying on the spending model as well as expertise from the department. It is all just ...

The Minister for Education:

I am not going to hide from the point that I have ideals and expectations and views of what our education ought to be, like I aim high and I want our young people, I want our population to feel like they can be confident, self-aware, able individuals no matter what needs they have. That system comes at a cost and that system ... I mean, you just have to look internationally. That is the thing, I try to encourage people not just to look to the U.K. Wales are even trying to move away from some of the things that are happening in terms of the English model of education. You need to look at the big, best and brightest, and with that comes ... whether that is a cost, but there are principles, there are cultures in the way that you provide this. We are going back to the discussion we were having before about the review framework. It is a change of mindset, it is a different way of doing things. I stood on an Island-wide mandate to be Minister for Education, so I do not think it is unclear about where I would like to go, but I also have a duty to the people who pay to provide public services to make sure that they are listening to, they are engaged with and that we properly evidence and factual base and listen to the professionals, who know what they are doing, to come up with a solution.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Just a couple of general questions because we have got 5 minutes left. Going back to the teachers' survey, have you ensured that teachers have got adequate time to complete the survey in schools?

Are they expected to do it ... would head teachers have allocated time to do that for teachers in schools or would teachers be doing that in their own time? How would that be ... and in colleges - I apologise, I must say colleges as well, and I have said that twice now - are you ensuring that head teachers, for example, have provided time for staff to do that in schools?

The Minister for Education:

I hope so, but I will hand over to Seán and Keith to ...

Group Director of Education:

We have certainly encouraged heads to make time available. You will recall that unlike the 2015 and the 2017, it has had a later start, so in the previous rounds you will be well aware, Chair, that the inset day that fell on the Air Display day we asked to allocate, that was not possible, so we have asked schools to be accommodating. Keith and I touched base with our Head of Insight this morning and we have got quite a lot already returned. She was going through ...

Deputy R.J. Ward:

I am just conscious 29th November is the deadline and this is the absolute killer of a term, to be quite frank.

Group Director of Education:

Yes, absolutely.

Director, Policy and Planning:

I think we will extend the deadline out towards the end of term. I think we will need to give staff that opportunity and we plan to provide contact with heads to remind them to continue to give teachers the opportunity. I mean, in terms of the response rates so far, we are really impressed, so we want to keep that momentum. The plan is to continually update, but also to give teachers time until the end of term, because you are absolutely right.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

We would encourage publicly, as a Scrutiny Panel, teachers to complete the survey.

Group Director of Education:

Not to forget the point Deputy Pointon made earlier, that if there is behaviour in schools, it would be helpful to know that and we will happily address that either through general communication or directly.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

One final thing I really wanted to ask, because I asked a written question about lunchtimes in schools. The basis of that was wellbeing of young people and staff and there was quite a range of lunchtimes, ranging from 60 minutes to just 30 minutes. First, with that 30 minutes, is that including movement back to classrooms, which means it will end up being about 25 minutes?

[11:30]

Can I just ask, are they agreed centrally? Does a head teacher have to come to you and say: "I only want to have 30-minute lunch breaks"? Given the - I think they are very positive, by the way - project of primary school meals and so on, which we should be providing, I can remember my primary school lunches and I can still remember them to this day, fantastic, and I think we should be doing that. I really am concerned about the range of lunchtimes in secondary schools when we know that young people need to be encouraged to eat the right things and have time to relax and switch off or whatever. I just cannot really understand where these numbers are coming to. Is that an operational thing in schools or do they come to you? Would you give advice?

The Minister for Education:

You kind of answered that in the question in terms of head teachers are responsible for determining internal timings of the school day, but any changes to the start and finish times of the day must be consulted upon with the department, so it is consultation with the department, I imagine that would be, and feedback and maybe challenge and question about why that would be the case. It is not a central policy held and we basically say to heads: "That is what you have to do."

Deputy R.J. Ward:

What do you think the lunch break should be? It is an open question to everybody here.

The Minister for Education:

I do not know. I do not get one.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

The States Assembly has an hour and a quarter, so ...

The Minister for Education:

No, an hour and a half.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

An hour and a half, exactly.

The Deputy of St. Peter:

Can I quote Gordon Gekko?

Deputy R.J. Ward:

No.

Group Director of Education:

To add a dimension, this shows the amount of time that pupils get, but it is flexible within schools, so the Minister and myself visited one of the pilot schools of the hot school meal programme at Janvrin School and the amount ... there is a rolling programme to make sure that children eat, so different age groups will start and finish. The offer of lunch may be longer than these periods of time, but that is what the year groups and pupils with that get. I think the subject of the evaluation of the pilot, we have started with 2 schools, a third primary school coming onstream.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

All of those schools are 60 minutes and that makes sense. I am more concerned about ... I mean, Hautlieu is only 40 minutes, Les Quennevais 35, Le Rocquier and La Salle only 30 minutes. I just want to really get an opinion from you whether you think that is enough. It is a short time for ...

Group Director of Education:

It is a short time, and as I say, that decision-making is demised to the school leadership team.

The Deputy of St. Peter:

Sorry, I was going to ask this. The lunches that you are providing for primary schools, there are 2 primary schools as a pilot. Is there a need for those lunches to be cooked onsite, i.e. an educational need, so the children are going to learn from the preparation of those lunches or can they just be bought in, hot lunches be bought in from outside?

The Minister for Education:

As part of the food and nutrition strategy that was done with the health team, it is Caring Cooks are the ones that work directly under that strategy with the health team in terms of how we make food more nutritional, all those types of things. To answer your question, at the present time the food is brought in, but Caring Cooks do do a separate programme within schools which is called "Let's Get Cooking" which helps and supports children on how to basically make a meal and do the ingredients and do all the cooking bits and pieces. They have been working with schools for quite a period of

time now. They have 3 different programmes in place. One was the growing the vegetables in the garden at the school; the other one is the “Let’s Get Cooking” programme and then they have got the “Flourish” one, which is providing the meals that they have brought in to the school. In terms of logistics and ... but they are hot and they are fresh.

The Deputy of St. Peter:

I would just say that the hospital catering thing, where the maximum is way below capacity for delivering food out of catering into a place, so hospitals, schools, there is plenty of capacity there just onsite, joined up.

The Minister for Education:

It was a suggestion when we were talking about piloting whether that would be the case.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

I am conscious of time, and as an ex-teacher, I am twitching now, because I know I have got less than ...

The Deputy of St. Peter:

It is lunchtime and you have only got 20 minutes.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

So unless there is anything else anyone wants to add or anything you want to add to what we have talked about today, I would just thank you very much for your time and I will bring the hearing to an end. Thank you.

The Minister for Education:

Thank you very much.

[11:34]