



Children, Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny

Quarterly Hearing - Education

Witness: The Minister for Children and Education

Monday, 14th February 2022

Panel:

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

Deputy L.M.C. Doublet of St. Saviour (Vice-Chair)

Senator T.A. Vallois

Witnesses:

Deputy S.M. Wickenden of St. Helier, The Minister for Children and Education

Mr. R. Sainsbury, Acting Director General, C.Y.P.E.S.

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

Mr. K. Posner, Head of Office, C.Y.P.E.S.

Mr. J. Williams, Programme Director, Education Reform

Ms. A. Homer, Head of Finance Business Partnering, C.Y.P.E.S.

Mr. S. Penn, Operations Manager, Skills Jersey

[10:31]

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

Welcome to the quarterly hearing of the Minister for Children and Education in the education remit. This is the last public hearing we will be having in this term ,so an interesting one. We will start to introduce ourselves. There are quite a few people here and we are in person for the first time for a long time. I am Deputy Rob Ward and I chair the panel.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

Senator Tracey Vallois, a member of the panel.

Deputy L.M.C. Doublet of St. Saviour (Vice-Chair):

Deputy Louise Doublet, vice-chair of the panel.

The Minister for Children and Education:

Good morning, Deputy Scott Wickenden. I am the Minister for Children and Education, obviously here for education today.

Interim Director General, C.Y.P.E.S.:

Good morning. I am Rob Sainsbury, the interim director general for C.Y.P.E.S. (Children, Young People, Education and Skills).

Group Director, Education

Good morning, Sean O'Regan, group director of Education.

Head of Office, C.Y.P.E.S.:

Hello, I am Keith Posner, head of office at C.Y.P.E.S.

Programme Director, Education Reform:

Jonathan Williams, programme director for education reform.

Head of Finance Business Partnering, C.Y.P.E.S.:

Anne Homer, head of finance business partnering for C.Y.P.E.S.

Operations Manager, Skills Jersey:

Good morning, Stuart Penn from Skills Jersey.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

We did work out a collective noun for a group of C.Y.P.E.S.; it is a school obviously. It is a bad joke but it has to be done. The first question: Minister, can you give the panel an update on the progress of the education reform programme so far this year?

The Minister for Children and Education:

This year, obviously it is the start of a new year in the education reform programme and Jonathan Williams will be working with the team to continue the streams of work for the education reform programme, making sure that the funds that were set out to go in actually help out with him, with C,Y.P.E.S. in schools, is allocated in a way that has been set out throughout the previous year. That was identifying in a lot of ways where the money and how the money should be disseminated. So that has just continued. It is into the second month but that work is making sure that things like the

base budget money has gone to the budgets and the allocations for S.E.N. (special educational needs) and the likes are going out to the identified schools. But for any greater detail that are operational Jonathan Williams is here, he can let me know.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

I just wondered what is in that above and beyond what would normally happen because base budgets would go out normally, funds would go to schools, S.E.N. provision would go to schools each year on 1st January otherwise they could not function. In terms of the education reform programme itself, what would be different that is happening because of that reform programme that would not normally be happening, that education reform does suggest some sort of change. Do we have some examples of that?

Programme Director, Education Reform:

Of course, yes. I will just run down some of the programme list and give a couple of examples but if you wanted specific detail please do ask. In the context of our provision for children with English as an additional language, the programme board signed off at the end of last year in December a new way of determining which children needed what level of help. So we are now applying what is called the Bell Foundation framework, which looks at proficiency in English as opposed to whether a child is an E.A.L. (English as an additional language) child or not. It is more sophisticated, it means therefore a better support. What that means this quarter is we are into recruitment mode. We are looking for some new multi-lingual learner teachers, some new advisory teachers in schools, we have launched and continue to roll out a set of C.P.D. (continuing professional development) so that we can get a lot of the different teachers, advisers, and the key workers are genned up on what it means simply supporting a multi-lingual learner with a differentiated level of proficiency in English. That is one example as it relates to multi-lingual learners. If I choose another example, you will recall no doubt that there was a significant investment made, and this is the first year of the big money, as it were, in quality of teaching. So supporting teachers in learning and development. We set that budget last year by putting a number of different activities of the teachers but we are now working through our strategic affairs. So a lot grander, if you like. The immediate work in January and February, and I think this will go through to March, is we are looking at what I would call a stocktake of learning and development provision. So if I get rid of the jargon, what is it that we are delivering through our L and D. (learning and development) programmes, whether it be through the school improvement and advisory service, the inclusion team in our early years work, and what is going to teachers or to teachers' assistants or, perhaps in the private sector, the key workers? So we can use that as a base on which to build a set of new learning and development provisions so that we are much more aligned and coherent and do not simply knock over teachers by simply offering more and more and more without recognising the need to be clear about our prioritisation of different types of learning and development. Just to tie those two in: as you would expect, one of

the new sets of C.P.D. for teachers will be based on support from multi-lingual learners. So we have an intersection point between the range of new offers and some of the other provisions we are developing through E.A.L. Those are a couple of examples, if that is helpful.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

For example, to go back on that, in terms of the school review programme and what that ... sorry, you mentioned the school advisers.

Programme Director, Education Reform:

The improvement and advisory service.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Is it true that they have been upgraded in their silver service levels, by the way?

Programme Director, Education Reform:

I cannot answer that one.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Okay, just a question I had, something that occurred to me when you mentioned them. What is going to be different for teachers in terms of their training by half term?

Programme Director, Education Reform:

We are definitely in the rollout stage for our Bell Foundation framework and for our various other types of E.A.L. provision. So we differentiated the level of C.P.D. according to the extent to which a teacher or a key worker or a teaching assistant will be supporting a child. So it is not one size fits all. It is differentiated based on the need of the school. So that is happening.

The Minister for Children and Education:

Jonathan, can you not use things like C.P.D. without saying what it is?

Programme Director, Education Reform:

Continuing professional development. Thank you, Minister. So that is happening. We are also going to be completing the work for school level action planning and, as a consequence, learning and development.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

So specifically, what does that mean; school level action planning?

Programme Director, Education Reform:

We have a piece of work we are undertaking with the Anna Freud Consultancy to develop school level action plans for school provision to children who have social, emotional and mental health difficulties. That will complete by the end of quarter one. I say "school level", it means it is specific to the school rather a central approach. So we are trying to be reflective of the different needs a school has but that will put, for teachers, a different set of learning and development support according to their school leads. That would be another example of what is different to teachers.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

What about teachers who want to go on C.P.D. that is specifically for their subject? I can remember that it was almost impossible to get any staff along to the A.S.E. (Association for Science Education) conference, probably the best C.P.D. as a science teacher, for example. You could have a 3-day ... it was impossible to take your staff. You just could not. You took one person and then cascaded down in time that was not available. So you never got it done. What is going to be different? Because we are spending a lot of money and we are coming up with a lot of plans and a lot of ... to be honest, it is jargon. What is going to be different in schools. I think at the end of the term, this term of 4 years, we are now at a point where we are looking at schools and we are looking at funding - and we will talk about that later - but what is different? We have been through the education reform programme. It has the outcomes. I take on board the E.A.L. thing, although I do have a question regards whether there is an understanding within ... you may be proficient in the language but whether reading and so on is going to be as good as people think, because that is a hidden danger but that is a different thing. What is going to be different - perhaps, Minister or Sean, you can say - for teachers day to day. Are they going to get that C.P.D. because it has always been a problem, particularly after COVID, because we seem to be able to ask teachers to do more in terms of recovery from COVID and pay them more to do extra classes? What about the C.P.D. because they cannot get out of the classroom. They just cannot, there is no staff to cover them.

Group Director, Education:

As Jonathan has mentioned, this is the beginning of year 2 of the implementation of the education reform programme. That is significantly more resource than before. To answer your question directly, Jonathan has given good examples of whole system approach. How does the class teacher, whether primary or secondary or in special, gets better support to meet the needs of the multi-lingual learners in her class? But we have already started. Every S.E.N.Co. (Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator) in the Island is accessing Masters level degree qualification fully funded, all cover.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

That is not passed from teachers, that is S.E.N.Co.s.

Group Director, Education:

I am giving one example, if I may, Deputy. That started last September for the first cohort. The other 50 per cent, so this September we will have the whole of that cohort. We are working as part of this analysis of where the C.P.D. is needed. We did a survey of teachers and lecturers and we got around a 50 per cent return into David Berry, the head of the school improvement advisory service. That is allowing us to do both what Jonathan has alluded to, whole system improvement, but also at the individual level. Teachers are telling us some of them would like to study for a Masters or higher degree. We are looking to have a bespoke - I do not know is it a copyright term - but an institute of education for Jersey with a chosen partner, that may or may not be Highlands College. We are still working that up. So that we have got resource that allows teachers to say: "I want to develop my strength as a geography teacher, as a practitioner, in early years or all points in between." But we are starting with a system-wide work around multi-lingual learners, around special educational needs. The Jersey Premium funding going up that has a direct implication for staff.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

I just want to ask on the multi-lingual, it was known as English as an additional language, and you are using the Bell Foundation. We all know the phrase of it takes a village to bring up a child but in terms of the support for parents whose first language is not English, and their ability for that to follow through. How will that work and will it be in conjunction with the likes of Highlands or Skills Jersey to enable them to be assessed for these types of things so that it runs through the world that the child lives in really?

Programme Director, Education Reform:

The start point is looking at the schools and the children. That was the biggest block of established needs. That is where we started. I think there are 2 things perhaps relevant to the context of your question. The introduction of a language policy, which will be later in the second quarter, I think around May, looks to try and recognise a culture of the home country for that child in much greater depth so it is acknowledged as a real strength. That starts to bring some of the community aspect of the families into the school as well. There are a number of different things that we will provide a briefing on as we get towards that language policy implementation. There is also the suggestion within the programme or the project board of doing something for certain families as well, just as you described. We are looking through about what is the best kind of thing to do, how might we reach out to support parents, is it a Highlands provision or something else and how much money might it cost? I do not know the answer in terms of the exact way we would do things but parents are part of that second tranche we are considering at the moment.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

Just to follow up from that. Not just thinking about schools and colleges but thinking about the early years sector and the early learning goals. How does this fit in with the early learning goals? So the younger children, the 2s, 3s, 4 year-olds, in terms of their development in multi-lingual language.

Programme Director, Education Reform:

We have a subject matter expert, a lady called Eowyn Crisfield, who was appointed prior to my arrival, who is a strategic leader. She is the most informed and educated on the best provisions for multi-lingual learners. She is over in March. She is spending a great amount of her time with Nicola and the team in early years, also with some of our third sector providers and some of the private sector nurseries to try and determine what does it mean in terms of early years. Because again it seems a sequence. The big challenge for the board first is all of our schools, sort that out. So we are now just at the stage of putting that into place. And we are looking at Highlands, Youth Service, the 3 sectors of early years - so public sector, private sector and charitable sector - and thinking what does it mean now for these groups? Because the idea is a bit like you described, kind of a wraparound. So how do we think not just about child in school but also whether they will go home or go to a youth service or how might their parents be supported through Highlands. While I cannot give you an answer now, I am afraid, all of those items are on the list for our visit in March, is try to determine what is the plan, what is the action, what is the cost?

Senator T.A. Vallois:

It is just good that you are thinking about that because there is a lot of work going on, so it is like the next steps.

[10:45]

It is never-ending, is it not, really? I suppose the only other question is: what is the cross consideration with ... I understand this is English proficiency for multi-lingual, but we also have the speech and language therapy and all those types of support, whether that is via H.C.S. (Health and Community Services) or whether that is specialists within the schools to support those children with speech and language. Does this have a crossover?

Programme Director, Education Reform:

It absolutely does. Sorry, Minister. At the end of March, as requested, we will provide a much fuller briefing around the work in the early years, including the response to the early years policy development recommendations. But we have, in brief, spun up a programme already. We have speech and language therapy reflected in that. It is a set of services and therapy is provided by colleagues in Health and Community Services but they are effectively part of our wider team, so we are not carrying about departmental structures. We are thinking about the children who receive it.

We have a specific piece of work with E.C.O.F. (Every Child Our Future) where they are working, under their board request, to put a speech and language therapist into 2 schools. So that was approved last week and we are now looking to appoint a therapist who will do that as a pilot model to look at therapists based in schools rather than a surplus. It requires parents sometimes to visit, Overdale sometimes do have a therapist reaching out into the schools. And we have a good challenge with my colleagues in the private sector around what does this look like for the early years group in the 2s and 3s. We are working with the head of speech and language therapy to determine exactly what that model should be. They are firmly part of the team. We have some answers in the context of doing some additional work with one of the charitable sectors and we have further work to do to determine how to further augment that service into children.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

That is great, thank you very much.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

I was going to ask what the key milestones in 2022 are, in terms of the education reform programme.

The Minister for Children and Education:

We are going to be sorting out the planning for the recommendations of the inclusion review; continuing full development of the funding formula, that I know we are going to talk about later; embed the new English as an additional language and low prior attainment provisions; complete a design brief and start the development of the institute for education; complete and start the implementation of the school level action plan for S.E.M.H. (social, emotional and mental health) with the Anna Freud Consultancy; initiating projects for a new model of board of governors; strengthening financial governance in schools; developing accountability systems in schools; continuing project delivery with best start programme ...

Deputy R.J. Ward:

In terms of the milestone in terms of dates for those, are there specific dates for those to be implemented? That is a list of projects ...

Programme Director, Education Reform:

Yes, I can provide the dates for the underlying milestones against each of those if the panel ...

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Yes, that would be very useful.

Programme Director, Education Reform:

Yes, of course.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

One of the things is, you explained to the panel in a recent letter, the intention to transition to the funding formula in phases. Why was the panel not informed of this during the Government Plan review?

The Minister for Children and Education:

I believe we have mentioned that within one of the Scrutiny Hearings. Jonathan mentioned it himself.

Programme Director, Education Reform:

I believe I had in the past, in answer to a similar question, talked about the phased nature of transition and the inability to turn one thing on overnight and that the first piece was to ...

Deputy R.J. Ward:

I think what we got was that the intention was to have it in place by January, from the transcript of one of the hearings.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

It was in the Government Plan that it would be beginning of ... there was no mention of phasing in the Government Plan. That is where we saw it from.

The Minister for Children and Education:

We have mentioned it in a Scrutiny hearing on questions and then Jonathan was questioned about it; that is in a transcript from a Scrutiny hearing.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

What we have seen is, the words were that it would be in place ... the intention is to have - there is the word "intention", but we have heard that a lot - for January. It is now mid-February.

Programme Director, Education Reform:

I will tie the 2 things together. It was always about having phased transition and the intent was to have that first phase in place in January. We did put the funding formula to use for our budget allocation. Not everything ...

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Okay, so you have the funding formula.

Programme Director, Education Reform:

We have used the funding formula to create the budgets for 2022 and will continue to use more of the new funding formula into 2023 and beyond. That is because there are some plans the Minister has set around the potential for incremental funds going into a school, which will be presented to the Government Plan at the end of this year. Again, if new funds arrive, the formula has to change to reflect that.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

When you say the 2022 budget, do you mean the 2022 Government Plan budget or do you mean the academic year budget?

Programme Director, Education Reform:

The school budget for financial year 2022.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

Okay. When you talk about the different phases, the complexity in what was the age weighted pupil unit, and then, of course, we had pots of money alongside that; so social, emotional and mental health and your English as an additional language and all these other pots. Is that all being amalgamated into one and that is why it is being phased?

Programme Director, Education Reform:

The concept of pots probably still exists in the future. I was discussing this with the lead consultants who wrote the report commissioned by yourself. It is just how it is then allocated to schools. It used to be lots of separate single lines added over time. It is now aggregated into a single budget. We put it out in one budget, I think, in mid-January 2022. The only thing that is still outside, as it relates to the money going in this year, is we have not quite worked out how to allocate the year of funding into schools or into the centre and for the bit that goes into schools, how much and to which schools. That bit was definitely outside still; otherwise those have been incorporated into a single school budget allocated in mid-January. We set out to schools a very detailed brief as to how much money was going for which different things.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

What formula are you using now?

Programme Director, Education Reform:

The whole concept of the transition is some of the old formula is still in use, but we have ...

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Which parts of the old formula?

Programme Director, Education Reform:

Some of the old formula as it relates to looking at school salaries in October of last year, to set a staff base this year. But examples of new, is looking at the components of the inclusion review, so the working part of the funding formula, to allocate new money coming into the system this year. So in transition, at least for 2 years, probably 3 years, we will have decreasing bits of the old formula and increasing bits of the new formula. It is complex. This is why we are keen to offer a more detailed briefing.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

We asked for a funding formula. We were told that it would be available in January. It is now a phased formula; it could happen over 2 or 3 years. Do schools understand what the formula for funding is?

Programme Director, Education Reform:

Yes. Schools were given ...

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Is it more or less than before per pupil?

Programme Director, Education Reform:

We are looking at a per school basis. It is more. One school has had a material reduced pupil number, otherwise, all schools have more than their budget last year and more of their actual ...

Deputy R.J. Ward:

We are talking per pupil. Will schools that have been recognised as having problems with funding ... all the issues we had with Haute Vallée School, and we could have picked out other schools as well, that have struggled for funding for years and years and years. That is a reality. Has the new funding formula addressed that issue? Can somebody tell me: yes or no? Or are we going to have the same issue with regards funding?

Programme Director, Education Reform:

My belief is that we have addressed the issue. Other than the extent to which there is further money required for inclusion.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Okay. How have you addressed the issue?

Programme Director, Education Reform:

All schools now have more than their budgets in 2021 and with the omission of ... or the absence of one school, more than their actual expenditure in 2021. So the expectation set coming into this year is that schools should be able to operate within their budgets.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Okay. Are those budgets different from the previous year and how have you determined what those budgets need to be?

Programme Director, Education Reform:

They are different, in that they are greater.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Okay.

Programme Director, Education Reform:

Some of the old formula has been used still. For example, the piece around the numbers of staff and the grade of staff and the cost of staff. However, there are some differences. A difference would be we have given money for the first time around low prior attainment. We have given very detailed lists of which children qualify for that and therefore how schools can build money in. We have put money in for inclusion differently this year than in previous years and we give money differently for E.A.L. as well. So they are 3 examples of the differences alongside some of the old formula which still has to live on.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Would you say - this is becoming very difficult - that that money is now better targeted to those schools that need it more?

The Minister for Children and Education:

Yes.

Programme Director, Education Reform:

Yes. I believe so, yes.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Yes?

The Minister for Children and Education:

Yes.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Why has it been so difficult to produce a funding formula for us to look at? This is difficult because we, as a panel, have asked for the funding formula, saying: "How are you going to fund schools?" You have the age weighted pupil units from before. Has that changed? Are we getting more per pupil? Or has that gone out of the window?

Programme Director, Education Reform:

We are not looking at an age weighted pupil model at all.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

That is the issue.

Programme Director, Education Reform:

It is a different way of allocating funds.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

I am sure you can understand that we do not have a view at all of how schools are now being funded, because we do not see the funding formula. We saw the age weighted pupil unit. Now we are being told they are having more money. However, we have nothing to compare it to, because we do not know how you are funding it. We cannot scrutinise funding of schools any more. Do you understand that? Do you understand where I am coming from?

Programme Director, Education Reform:

I can see the challenge, but we can provide the details at a school level. Each school, as part of the budget setting in 2022, has had a detailed analysis of how the budget has been constructed. We have also encouraged schools, more now than ever, to go from the bottom-line number, so they can compare how much they have in totality in 2022 against 2 critical figures: what their budget was last year and what their actual was last year. They can see there is a material increase in the amount of money they have available. We have been clear about how we have allocated money. For example, as it relates to S.E.N. or as it relates to those with low prior attainment. We can share those levels, as an example perhaps, from the schools.

Group Director, Education:

What is important in this discussion is that we provide the detail of the narrative in terms of how we have got to where we have got to, what 2022 looks like, and clarify the points that look different. There is clearly a legacy element of the previous funding application that you have used. What the

panel are really asking for is: how is this going to change for the future and how can this be flexible enough to identify need going into years beyond this year? This is my understanding of the formula application; that is the flexibility. That is the benefit of this new approach.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

What I see, if I am honest, and part of the role of Scrutiny is to play devil's advocate, so let us do it, is that it would be impossible to compare any new formula - it sounds extraordinarily complex and is more about project management than anything else; it looks great on a spreadsheet - with what has gone previously. We had the age weighted pupil unit and you could compare how much you get per pupil in one school to a state-funded school, to an assisted school, or, for example, a primary to a secondary. Now it seems to be that you are talking about separating the salaries out, take those out of it, fund those, and then have something on top of it. What is that going to look like? How will that be constructed? It is not going to be an age weighted pupil unit anymore. It is not going to be per pupil, is it?

Senator T.A. Vallois:

The other question that adds to that is there was an actual appendix to the report that was done by 2020. In the appendix there was a diagram that suggested what the funding formula could look like. The question is: is that what we are following?

The Minister for Children and Education:

That is what we have followed. That appendix is the basis of how the funding formula has been worked out.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

Just so I can understand, because you mention inclusion, and this is one of the big issues with the age weighted pupil unit, it was 30 years old, Hautlieu were not even getting social, emotional and mental health funding, because of the Kathie Bull report. When you say it is going to take over 2 to 3 years and schools are getting more money with what we have done so far, then what do you mean by inclusion? Is that special educational needs funding? Is it social, emotional and mental health funding? Is it another acronym that I can find for supporting students? Is that in the inclusion that will take 2 to 3 years or is that already included in the funding formula as it stands?

The Minister for Children and Education:

It is about targeted needs for each pupil. It is understanding that if they do have S.E.N. or S.E.M.H. or the likes then the school, I believe, is allocated funding. Each school will have the ability when children are diagnosed, and we know what is going on, where the funding is given to those schools,

so that they are funded to help support those children at a targeted level, rather than just this much because you have a child in the school.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

Will the funding formula - because I know there was an issue around capital and things like paying the electricity bill, paying the gas bill, paying the elements that make the school run in terms of the foundation, other than the teachers, their actual building requirements - is that included in the funding formula now?

The Minister for Children and Education:

Yes.

Programme Director, Education Reform:

A couple of things in there, just to reinforce what the Minister said; yes, we are following those component blocks that he referred to that were set out in the appendices. An example is shifting between variable and fixed and being much more targeted for certain children with certain needs. Yes, both of those things are absolutely part of the new formula. The second piece, in the context of is the inclusion money in already, there has been an increase to the total budget for schools and that increase has been allocated for inclusion.

[11:00]

That will be under the Minister's instruction, coming back to the Government Plan or business case, for more money. Yes, more money is in for 2022 budgets and we believe we need more still. That will be in a business case.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

On the elements that are in there, social, emotional and mental health, going back to the Hautlieu point, is there now funding for Hautlieu School for social, emotional and mental health?

Programme Director, Education Reform:

There is for inclusion generally. The Kathie Bull money, as it was, we are detuning what that looks like. That was a very specific allocation. That has been detuned and put into a broader fund or costing for inclusion, which is, by definition, include all the acronyms you have made reference to. It includes those children with special educational needs and with English as an additional language; so proper inclusion, as part of that targeted steer that 2020 consultancy gave us.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

Okay, thank you.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

In terms of resourcing of schools, the money left over so it can buy materials and whatever you need to teach, is that another segment of this funding formula, which I cannot picture in my head, if I am honest?

Programme Director, Education Reform:

Yes. We have tried to look at what the basic books and pens would be. There is also one bit which we have built, which is the cost of technology and the replenishment of assets. If the whiteboard has a life of, let us say, 5 years and a laptop has a life of 3 years, we are trying to build in the cost of replenishment by working with colleagues in Modernisation and Digital to say: what is a standard for a whiteboard or a smart TV? So schools automatically know that every X years they can replace their kit. We are trying to consider it through both of those things.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

That will have a significant impact on the way that schools themselves allocate budgets to department, will it not? It has become more centralised. How will a headteacher allocate a budget to a department? They will not have to do the I.T. (information technology) any more. They will not have to do the whiteboards.

Programme Director, Education Reform:

Some things will come out, otherwise that is back to headteacher autonomy. What we have said is that we need to be very, very clear in the quantum, the total value a school receives, but there is still then autonomy for the headteacher to determine the allocation underneath that.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

The quality assurance process has finished, has it?

Programme Director, Education Reform:

The quality assurance process at the setting of the budget for 2022 has. We are now at the next phase of quality assurance. These things are very well defined. I have made reference to the additional funding we believe is required for inclusion. The next bit of quality assurance is looking specifically at that inclusion business case. What are the things that we think will be different and require incremental funding to deliver the inclusion review in totality? What does that look like in terms of additions to a school budget? The quality assurance says: "Is that sensible? Have you got the right kind of roles? What is going on elsewhere in the U.K. (United Kingdom)? It is a benchmark

in best practice there. We ignore some of it, but we at least have to ask questions and say: “Why do we look different from country A and is that sensible?”

Senator T.A. Vallois:

I would just like to challenge the quality assurance piece slightly if I can. The funding formula and report that was done on reform was very much looking more at best practice across the world rather than just what England and Wales do. There are reasons for that; one of the *raison d'être* about trying to be one of the best places in the world, in terms of education. I know it is a mean feat and it is going to take a while to get there. That quality assurance piece, is it purely people from England and Wales who know the English and Welsh curriculum and the way schools run there that are doing quality assurance and are we paying for that?

Programme Director, Education Reform:

A couple of things there. They are looking at international reference sites as well as U.K. The additional challenge: “We are looking at international reference sites. Please put the additional thoughts in about the extent to which something can be transferred.” So we know through other walks of life you cannot simply lift up the model from Shanghai and plop it into Jersey. You cannot do 50 children who are exceptionally well-drilled in the same way perhaps as you culturally can do in China. Look at the international reference sites, but also think about: is this something which could be transferrable? Could it influence us as an aspect of how we operate? The piece around England and Wales is important, because our curriculum is very much still predicated on that. We recruit our teachers, typically, from that area. There is some reference to the U.K. We are not simply saying: “What does the U.K. look like? What does England look like? Let us follow that.” We have to look at what that looks like and determine: do we want to follow that? If so, why? If not, why? That is part of the quality assurance. It is broader. Finally, yes, we are paying for quality assurance.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

How much?

Programme Director, Education Reform:

The budget is £10,000 for the year. That can vary if we want to ask more questions.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Within that reform programme, as you go through the phases, is one of the things that is going to be looked at the distribution of responsibility points? That was one of the first things that was addressed, I believe, in the reform. What impact is that going to have?

Group Director, Education:

One element is workforce. The independent school funding review set up 6 transformational policy areas that we should scrutinise. We added digital in there, that Jonathan has already referenced. We had some inherited reform work about workforce, teachers' terms and conditions, which included the S.A. (supplementary allowance) points that went right back to the 2019 settlement of the industrial action of that year. So that S.A. point work is ongoing. The Teacher Service tell us that teachers feel they can be opaque; the S.A. points are not of equal value in different schools and have asked to do that. One of the team under Jonathan is focused specifically on the workforce dimension of reform.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

So where are we heading with that? Is that looking like S.A. points will go? They will be changed?

Programme Director, Education Reform:

I would say it is too soon to tell what the answer is. We are working with colleagues. I have a session this afternoon with primary heads of what they think their S.A. point world looks like. One of the directions of travel is rather than give multiple different S.A. points out, is there a core role? Rather than having teacher plus ex-S.A. points, does this work? Is it simply a head of department or a head of something? To then move away from S.A. points into a defined role that carries a defined salary, but no S.A. points. A part of that challenge was also around the governance. We know that different schools have used different S.A. points for different purposes over the years and that is what has caused upset among some of the workforce. To move to a position that says you can only give an S.A. point out for these reasons and an annual review of all governance ranging around S.A. points, so we can make sure that having reset how they are allocated that we then comply with that reset. There are a few different aspects to it.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Okay. We are not heading towards the removal of S.A. points, just an expectation of teachers taking on more responsibility as they become more experienced?

Group Director, Education:

As Jonathan said, it is too early to say what it would look like. To reassure you, we are still using the S.A. point methodology to better improve, for example, the Jersey tutoring programme in our schools, the work we have been discussing about multi-lingual learners. There is a dimension that schools will use that to upskill and give a higher focus to the school. Somebody will have that as an area of responsibility. We are still using S.A. points for that. It is at a consistent value across the system. We have made sure it is fair.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

Can I clarify the governance around that then? We talk about the autonomy of headteachers. Each headteacher will have a different need in each school, depending on the demographic of the children. How does the centralisation, I suppose, of the expectations of those S.A. points align with the autonomy of the headteacher of the school? How does that work, if it does at all?

Programme Director, Education Reform:

The idea is that the rulebook, as it were, that sets out and describes how and when an S.A. point can be given out and when not. The headteacher has discretion to follow that rule book. They are able to apply S.A. points to roles that they want to, subject to conforming with that guidance. They have to address things like: is there a premium value for school A versus school B? We know that S.A. points have been used for recruitment purposes, perhaps not always sensible. That is in there. This is a complex point, again, system accountability, in how you drive it, where there is discretion, and where there is not. There is not going to be one model that says headteachers have discretion for these things and central for these things. There will be different levels of autonomy and discretion for different things.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

It is going to be more like a framework. Here is a framework of what really could be ... a bit like the Public Finances Manual? "Here is a framework and you can move within or around these lines."

Programme Director, Education Reform:

Yes, you set the parameters, you set a big square, and you can move wherever you want to within that big square. Yes, that square sets a framework. One example would be as we move towards a new provision for multi-lingual learners. It will set quite tight parameters, so it will not be for schools to simply get money and do whatever they want. We are going to be quite directive, because we know we have to go through a phase of improving our capability. Other areas are very well-evolved, so we do not have to have a lot of central guidance there. That can really be up to headteachers. My sense at the moment is that will change according to the provision of a cohort of children.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

In terms of going back to the governance, because being able to have that discretion and have that power with the funding and the needs of the school, how does the accountability work of that then? I suppose this is work that you are working on. You have something like 40-odd lines of management. It is not doable for one person.

Group Director, Education:

It is delegated. You asked, Senator Vallois, a really, really important question. A real life-lifted example: every school has a cycle of school development planning, what do we need to do? How well are our children doing? What can we do better? Where are we going to put our focus? That is agreed with the senior adviser who visits every term or every half term at times. The point about the framework versus autonomy, how much licence a head has to operate on her own or his own versus the central framework is really clear. For example, a new headteacher or a headteacher in post reviewing sees that writing performance in a primary school is not as good as it should be compared to statistical neighbours. We look at why. What do we need to do about that? Is it about teacher skills? Is it about supporting parents? Is it the homework policy? Do we need to buy in resource? It may be we need S.A. points to give someone high focus. One of our staff will take that on as her priority. She will lead the training of staff. She will buy in resources. She will go into other schools. She will partner up with a school that is already doing it really well. We will pay an S.A. point. However, the S.A. point will not just be off the top of the headteacher's head. It will be back to the framework that says this amount of work and responsibility is worth a S.A.3 or a S.A.6, or whatever it is. That is just one part of the investment, because you will be dedicating your training time to that. You might be buying off-the-shelf products that work in raising children's performance in writing. You do that development work and then you measure again and writing gets better. Then you might move on to geography next year and pay someone else an S.A. point.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

The question I am asking is about the accountability. The director general will have accountability to the principal accountable officer for the spending of that money and making sure it is directed and targeted, as has been mentioned, in the right ways if something were to go wrong. If a school were following the framework, I use the positive side, is there a reward bonus for the schools doing really well, real value for money, to that school? It might be a day trip out or the centre will pay for a coach for them to go to somewhere as a "you are doing really well as a school". Or on the flip side: "You are throwing money down the drain. This is not ...". I ask the question, because this is really fundamental to the whole governance. Having so many lines of management it is really hard to do with so many different schools and needs. I will go to the director general.

Acting Director General, C.Y.P.E.S.:

This is the key part of the reform element. We are really clear, and I am very clear, that we have to get a better balance about how we allow that ability to act and that headteachers have discretion, they have functions that they are able to use their own understanding of their own organisation to do things. They also need the weight and support of Government and clear frameworks to enable them to follow policy and make sure they are not falling foul of the law, like we all do. In all honesty, that work around the governance element is not concluded. That is work we need to continue to do with headteachers. I get a feeling from talking to them that they all recognise the areas where they

would like more autonomy. That is often around the recruitment space with their workforce. They are the kind of things that I would like to get this reform programme into the position of providing that. What does sovereignty really mean for our headteachers? How can they make a reactive change for an emerging problem that they have without having to go through many different hoops? We are seeing that with the recruitment process. That is a clear objective for me to address, because it is too long. There are many other examples.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

We will be getting rid of procurement as well while we are at it?

Acting Director General, C.Y.P.E.S.:

If only.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

This is a very long conversation, but, again, the concerns are: where does this fit in with the funding formula, because you will be funding staffing, but S.A. points could be temporary? It strikes me there are going to be a lot of temporary S.A. points that act on a particular issue and then they will be gone again. They will be, if you like, zero hours contracts over a long term to perform a particular task and then be gone.

Head of Office, C.Y.P.E.S.:

Are you specifically asking about S.A. points on that?

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Yes.

Head of Office, C.Y.P.E.S.:

As Jonathan has alluded to, this is where the framework will come in. You will see there will be S.A. points for particular roles like head of a subject. The purpose of the review is to get that equity of different schools, similar-sized schools, similar-sized departments, but they could well be temporary S.A. points for particular projects that are time limited. That will be a natural thing to do. As we go into this with the exploration and working with our colleagues in schools that will become absolutely apparent. One thing I would say on this, and I think you are posing some really good questions, the thinking has not been developed enough yet. As Jonathan said, there are meetings happening now. If we came back and spoke to you or you inquired about this in 6 months, we would have a lot more information on this.

[11:15]

The one thing I would say is the professional performance area, the ones we have looked at ... because we have heard, as Sean has said, through surveys of teachers, that they feel it is inequitable the way ...

Deputy R.J. Ward:

It is happening within a framework of a development funding formula is not complete and has not been quality assessed, and it is a large part of the budget and then it is linked to autonomy. Again, across the field, there is an uncertainty there. I would say be very aware of that. Also, you are talking to headteachers, but are you talking to classroom teachers and what demographic of classroom teachers are you talking to? Those new to the profession or those who have been there a long time, those who are in the middle of that time, who perhaps are not getting any C.P.D.? Who are you talking to? That is a really important point to be made wherever you go. We need to move on, because we are running out of time. Is the Jersey Pupil Premium still being extended to 16 to 19 year-olds?

Programme Director, Education Reform:

Yes.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Yes, that is a quick answer. We have talked about the inclusion review. Implementing those recommendations, do you have an action plan and a time for when you see them being implemented?

Programme Director, Education Reform:

The Minister gave a number of milestones for 2022. They have dates. I will send you the single page that sets out the milestones and the quarter of the year in which they will land, just to provide ...

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Will they be intentions of milestones or actual milestones? Are they phased milestones?

Programme Director, Education Reform:

They are written as clear deliverables, so you can see what you get and when.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

With specific dates. I would be interested in the language used around that.

The Minister for Children and Education:

The inclusion review set out which recommendations it felt had ... 6 to 12 months, 12 to one year, one year to 2 years in there, and I think we do not disagree with those milestones and those recommendations.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

We have received a number of private submissions from the public around bullying in schools. Just for the benefit of the public, is it possible, Minister, for you to outline the current policy approach in respect of addressing bullying in schools at the present day?

The Minister for Children and Education:

I can tell you where we have got them. A new counter-bullying policy was ... I think it was 2020, I was reading it yesterday. No, 2019 there was a new counter-bullying policy. Now, all staff - and that is not just teachers - have been brought up to speed on the changes to the policy and the changes in approach in the ethos in managing bullying in schools. All the parents, carers and their schools have been invited to attend an evening session with the educational psychologist who has designed the new counter-bullying approach on the Island, and all pupils in the schools have seen a specifically-designed assembly on a new counter-bullying approach. We have Graham Ramsden who looks after the counter-bullying and he is an absolute expert in counter-bullying educational facilities, so I do feel it is in good hands. But we have been to all the schools and we have invited parents and we are recording aspects of bullying in all the schools as well.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

In terms of the approach with the policy, it is good having something written down and it is great that particularly people like the educational psychologist you mentioned being able to meet with parents or meet directly with staff - like you say, we have got expertise there - but is there a consistency with how the schools approach bullying? Is it consistent? Do you expect it to be consistent?

The Minister for Children and Education:

Well, the policy is quite clear, every school has got a counter-bullying network lead, who is responsible for the implementation and coordination. It includes a whole school counter-bullying audit tool and the like. So the tools that we have put in place and the policy we have put in place, it is very clear and concise about what should be done when bullying is reported and how it should be dealt with. So I would hope that it is a consistent approach across each school because we set it up in a way that the policy is for every school and the tools are for every school, and every school has been asked to implement them in the same way.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

So how would you summarise then; if you are a parent and your child is being bullied what do they do if they have got concerns?

Group Director, Education:

As the Minister says - asking Senator Vallois' question again, consistency across the piece - we have the same toolkit; we have now got consistent reporting of bullying instances. Bullying is a serious matter and research will tell us it goes on in all institutions; it is what you do about it.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Yes, so a parent would contact the school?

Group Director, Education:

Parent to school, and it is a school responsibility using the tools that we have provided, the training and the insights, and this is shared in the twilight meetings for parents and carers that is offered to each school. As the Minister said, our education psychology services, one individual lead, but all of them do this work. So it is at the school level but we have a very clear process, if people are not satisfied, how to escalate that.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Yes, and that is what I was going to ask about because the issues I think are not when something happens, bullying happens and the school deals with it well, great, the school has dealt with it, the children are sorted, there may be a learning outcome even for the person. But when it does not go well and parents are unhappy do you think it is clear enough as to what they do?

Group Director, Education:

There is a very clear cross-government complaints, concerns and compliments process that our colleagues in C.L.S. (Customer and Local Services) ... when we are contacted directly for an education setting the escalation is clear. Within a school you raise it with a relevant teacher or senior teacher, it needs to be to the headteacher. For our secondary schools, referring back to an earlier discussion about governance, we have governing bodies, not for our primary and special schools, they have a role, but the central team will rapidly pick up a concern and if need be meet with the parents of the concern, listen to that and work. But the solution will be in the school setting. In extremists there may be a case for change of placement for either the individual who is the victim or the bullying individual, but we would always want to solve it at the school level because there are always reasons for people's behaviours and what we have to do is get underneath that and crack it.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

I suppose the question I have got is I am not sure whether it is very clear in terms of parents feeling like they know where to complain and who to complain to. There seems to be a gap between that school and the department, and the accountability roles that sit between there. Do you believe that there needs to be more clarity for the parents, and I suppose the wider family or carers or guardians, to understand where to go to and who to go to? I know there are steps; I know that because I have been the Minister for Education, but I have been in the States for a very long time. Do you think if you were just a layperson and went on gov.je to make a complaint it would be clear enough?

The Minister for Children and Education:

As a parent do you feel that you have received enough information from your school just in case to say this is where the process ...

Senator T.A. Vallois:

I mean, you get a handbook at the beginning when they start at the particular school. The handbook is not necessarily updated but you do get letters here and there sent to you. It is not like the primary school days when you get a letter in the bag and it comes home. Now sometimes it gets mixed up in emails or it can end up in spam. That is why I just ask the question of clarity around being able to ...

Group Director, Education:

If I may, Senator Vallois, you have directly raised with me in the last month exactly these really important points. I have personally raised that with the group director in C.L.S., Customer and Local Services, they oversee it, about giving greater specificity if it is about a school or a nursery or a college, rather than anywhere that you would ... and the policy is currently under review. I think the review finishes at the end of this calendar month, and the relevant group director who I have had personal correspondence with I am more than happy to share, is taking your input under advisement. It is part of a Government of Jersey response so there is consistency but if that has made it harder for some parents and carers we will want to give greater clarity on that.

Acting Director General, C.Y.P.E.S.:

I think I would just add to that for me that I think there is a realisation that the current process as is does not always lend itself to be easily navigated for laypeople, and for provision-facing services - which is what education is - that connectivity then to the government customer service feedback I think is a bit confusing. So we are working with colleagues to clear that up because it needs to be responsive and people need to understand it.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

As somebody that has come from Health and Community Services, who has got a very different feedback system, because it is specialised, is it not, there is the patient side, then there is the basic customer interaction side; it is very different. Education, I would argue, is the same, it is a very different provision. So would you look at something similar to ... I am not sure whether Health and Community Services have set it up yet.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Can I just recommend that we address an accountability report produced by the Scrutiny Panel, 42,000 words on exactly those topics, and a summary of where we are with addressing accountability in the States? The reality is the States has only just initiated a system that records complaints and when they were made and has a timeline. So there is a long way to go on these things but the beginning point is there, the foundations, but there is a lot to address there. Because we have addressed this so much I would really recommend have a read of that because it looks at lots of different areas.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

I suppose the only other thing that I want to raise on the bullying, because we are a small Island and a small community; I know there was the Children's Commissioner and the C.Y.P.E.S. joint survey that was done in 2020 about the issue, there was a huge issue with regards to bullying. But with the advent of social media in particular, things like Tik Tok, WhatsApp, Snapchat, all those wonderful different things that we have got ...

The Minister for Children and Education:

It is 24/7.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

It is, so how is it determined or separated between the school institution's responsibility for resolving some of these adolescent conflicts, which is usually what it is, it is more so in the upper years - you get it in primary schools but ...

The Minister for Children and Education:

You see it in adult life at the moment on social media, posting things to try and intimidate other Members.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

Let us not go there, we are talking about schools; but how do you distinguish between institutions like schools and the wider community? How is that consistency looked after? You have got the children's remit and education.

The Minister for Children and Education:

It does not happen just within a school, does it? Because of social media it can happen between schools. We know that bullying can happen across the Island. It should be dealt with in the same way.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Surely the policy is consistent and addresses that, so how does it address that, I think is what the Senator is asking?

The Minister for Children and Education:

So if one child at one of our schools is bullying another child at another school I am sure that is met within the same light across the schools. I am not sure.

Group Director, Education:

The interschool contact, and there often is a context; what is a challenge is bullying behaviours in a school community, absolutely schools are powerful agents to help fix that. They cannot fix all relationship issues. Sometimes school teachers and heads are asked to resolve disputes between peer groups, friendship groups, often but not exclusively in the teenage years that are beyond the responsibility and probably would be open to challenge if a school presumed to sit down this group of 8 or 10 and fix relationship issues that are outside the school. So schools want to do it the other way, be on the front foot and proactively work with young people through assemblies, by daily tutor time, by personal, social or health education curriculum as to how we build stronger relationships and find ways of resolving that. That is where schools are very proactive and I think see off a lot of potential bullying by that early engagement, which is not to make light of the sharp end when a bullying incident is happening.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

I suppose the question is where is the line between that bullying and the harassment piece? So you have got some times where it might not be happening in school because you know the teachers will come down on you and that is not good. But then it happens after school on the way home and the kid gets picked on, and that is not the school's responsibility, it is not in the grounds but yet they are all wearing the school uniform, they are all noticed as ... is there a line that is drawn about how you would use harassment rules in terms of like a word of advice or something like that from community police officers or honoraries? Is there anything like that in train or in thinking?

Group Director, Education:

The senior leadership of C.Y.P.E.S. and the senior leadership at States of Jersey Police have been having weekly meetings. In fact this afternoon we are meeting the group director and the chief of police. Colleagues in the police have produced a bespoke version at the sharp end when to call the police and when in a children's home setting under the Minister, in a youth club under the Minister, in a school in the area under the Minister that I work, so that we get the right level of graduation, the right level of consistency, because you do not want to escalate too far but sometimes the community police officers are really good early intervention support on the general rather than the conversation that might lead to a possible offence.

Acting Director General, C.Y.P.E.S.:

I think we need to do more work in this space. I mean, it is really clear there is a continuing problem and it is probably becoming more intensified post-pandemic. So we need to continue to work with the Commissioner ...

The Minister for Children and Education:

Education is the way.

Acting Director General, C.Y.P.E.S.:

Exactly, and colleagues in S.o.J.P. (States of Jersey Police) and wider. I do not think we are there yet.

[11:30]

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Just a few questions about COVID-19 and schools. What are the key challenges within the school environment at present and what is being done to address them?

The Minister for Children and Education:

Luckily we are starting to see numbers going down at the moment. The key challenge in a school is about making sure that we are keeping classrooms open as much as possible and children within education. So that is about making sure that they are in safe environments for the children and the teachers and the staff within the school. That is the key challenge. There is nothing more important than that right now so we can continue educational outcomes for children.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

There have been some concerns raised with us privately as well regarding young children contracting COVID and being quite ill. Are you recording that? Are you monitoring that in schools

so there can be a flag that is raised that says: “We are getting quite a few young children, there is a spike here and we are going to have to do something else”?

The Minister for Children and Education:

We collect all the data about positive cases within schools and reasons for absence within schools. As far as sickness levels and the likes I am going to hand over to ...

Acting Director General, C.Y.P.E.S.:

We would not be recording the severity of illness. I think that is something that we would need to link in with primary care colleagues.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

It is just that we do hear a lot that it is a mild illness in children and we do see examples of ... a friend of mine, his 9 year-old is really quite ill at the moment and it may be the exception to the rule but we do not know because we have not recorded it. Is there any news on the air filtration devices? We have been asked about that as well as a panel.

The Minister for Children and Education:

Absolutely. Can I hand over to Keith who has been dealing with the intimate details of it.

Head of Office, C.Y.P.E.S.:

This week we should be taking delivery of an additional 300 CO₂ monitors to distribute out to schools. That is on top of the 200 that we previously purchased. Schools can then move these monitors around to find those areas where there are kind of poor CO₂ levels. We have initially purchased 100 H.E.P.A. (high efficiency particulate air) filters and based on the feedback that we get back from schools, and we will be detailing the guidance to schools this week, and we will then distribute those H.E.P.A. filters out into those areas. We will be reviewing this because if we find there is a requirement for more of these filters ... we will also get some good feedback from schools on the type of filter - we have done a lot of research into these filters - whether these are the correct ones, so it gives the opportunity then if we do need to purchase more to go back and then continually distribute them out to those areas where there is that poor ventilation.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

With the CO₂ monitors, is it clear as to what the action is to be taken if those start beeping?

Head of Office, C.Y.P.E.S.:

Yes, absolutely. So there are levels of CO₂ that forms kind of almost like a baseline where ventilation is not good enough. At that point there is guidance around trying some other measures, for example

open doors, open windows, some that might not be practical, some that might not be possible, and that is where there is the notification to us centrally then to distribute those filters out. That is how we are planning on doing this. We are obviously going to be monitoring it. I think as we move into the spring/summer months anyway ventilation gets better at schools because the weather gets warmer. But it is something that we are going to be continually looking at when we move through even into the colder months at the back end of the year.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Where are we with COVID affected students undertaking exams in the January period? There are quite a few exams, both the ...

Group Director, Education:

I.G.C.S.E. (International General Certificate of Secondary Education) mathematics happened and mock exams as well, and BTech at Highlands. They have all run. We have managed to get the students in the halls under exam conditions with invigilators. The same with November with the English I.G.C.S.E. in 5 of our secondary schools.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Yes, I get it when they have happened. How many have missed exams because of COVID? Has there been a significant portion?

Group Director, Education:

That would be at the school level. I am not sure that we hold that data but the examination boards have got provision in place where the individual can be in isolation and still do the examination. Certainly across all of our schools for mocks we have had groups of year 11s, for example, who have just had to keep separate from their friends and do their mock exam, because, as the panel will be aware, for the last 2 years of central-assessed grades, teacher-assessed grades, the mocks are really important for young people if, heaven forfend, real-life exams could not happen.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

Can I just ask because it is not made clear - and I am asking this as a parent because I know the answer and the best questions are the answers that you know - so the understanding or knowledge of if your kid does have COVID and it is that examination time, and I am thinking particularly when we get to May/June time which is usually when the big ones happen and it is all like last minute stress, how aware are the parents knowing that they can still take that exam?

Group Director, Education:

I think Senator Vallois would expect me to say that is for the school to communicate, because we have a monthly meeting with headteachers and assessment leads, examination officers meet with the department, so the latest guidance last week Monday there was a big, new announcement from the exam board and we are all poring over the output of that. So we are communicating with school leads and then it is for schools to onwards communicate to parents the importance of using the alternative arrangements.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Are plans in place for the summer exams?

Senator T.A. Vallois:

I am just thinking of what happened last year with the spike that happened at the end of the term.

Group Director, Education:

Yes, it was a real challenge, as you say, the November/December period and then June with the spike. Jersey is a very small jurisdiction in terms of the big piece so we are reliant on examination boards. As Senator Vallois will know from a couple of years ago, in 2018 we had big plans of how we would keep year 11 running for exams and then the Government in the United Kingdom cancelled the examinations so we had no agency there. But we are absolutely on top of the latest guidance from Q.C.A. (Qualifications and Curriculum Authority) from the exams watchdog, and the individual exam boards that Jersey schools ...

The Minister for Children and Education:

Being aware of what happened last summer we are ready in case that has to happen again.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

So the exams are planned to go ahead; they are somewhat changed to give better access to the exams because of disrupted learning, is what my understanding is. Since the end of the previous academic year what are the challenges that have been faced in the wider school community? Because we have noticed there are some year groups still closing down in some schools because of staffing and so on; some of the primaries I know have had a challenging time. How do you characterise where we are? I get the idea of the main priority is just keeping the schools open, but what about the other challenges? Is there anything else we should be doing differently? Is there anything else you think needs to be added? Or are we just hopeful that COVID is going to go away now, as we all are, but we have to be realistic. Is there anything you would have done differently with regards to COVID? Interesting question to always ask because I think there is nothing wrong with saying you would do something differently. I look back and certainly I would do things differently in my life.

Group Director, Education:

It is a really good question; we reflect on that all of the time. The critical thing for young people - and you have used the phrase "learning loss" - and last summer there was some analysis for local authority about learning loss, so in Bolton in Lancashire it was at one of the extreme with how many thousands of hours potentially the average G.C.S.E. (General Certificate of Secondary Education) student had less than Guildford or parts of Surrey at the higher. Jersey would have been at the very top end of that in terms of present learning in the school or online support if you individually were off with the COVID or your year group were forced for a day in a rotation.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

One reason I ask - sorry to interrupt - is those sorts of things with learning may influence the digital element of what you were talking about, whatever digital means, and we did ask what digital means once and it was quite an interesting answer because it is not just putting a computer in front of somebody. But with that learning from what happened with COVID we did uncover that a lot of families were not in a position to learn at home, both in terms of space in their homes, inadequacy of accommodation, access to the internet, access to equipment. Do you think that will drive that platform of education reform as well as an influencer?

Group Director, Education:

The Minister or other colleagues will have a view; I think for the worst reason we went on a rapid learning journey. Structurally Highlands College, our F.E. (further education) college, was already established for 2 years with Microsoft Teams as a learning platform and were able to go. Secondary schools were pretty far on with the infrastructure so they were able to launch either using Teams as it was being rolled or Zoom and other platforms. Our primary schools were much further off; Tapestry became a quick adopter, we had other tools, and it was not consistent across the piece because of the level of readiness. We have got much, much better. Are we there yet? I do not think we are. I think with the oldest age groups we may never go back. I think some courses at Highlands and certain university courses may have 20 to 30 per cent that do use digital platforms for online learning. We may never go back and to full face to face.

The Minister for Children and Education:

I have been talking across Island to Guernsey especially about sharing resources in, say, languages; so the last 2 periods every Thursday would be a language across all schools across all Islands, and then if you have a Russian teacher in Jersey and children want to opt to learn Russian then you could do it ...

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Maybe not the best example in the current climate.

The Minister for Children and Education:

Maybe not, but they are not all bad. You could pick that class and you could learn from a teacher in the Isle of Man or in Guernsey or in Gibraltar on that subject matter using digital means much better if we co-ordinate across the Islands, and those are some of the conversations I am having right now.

Acting Director General, C.Y.P.E.S.:

I think there is some general learning though that I think we all recognise. As somebody coming in relatively new it is really clear to me to see that operationally the pandemic has really taken its toll, particularly on the work force. If you look at the challenge of teachers in contact tracing, making sure infection control procedures are effectively in place, that is operationally difficult and I think we need to think about how do we make sure that they have the right level of support. I can see where that has been put in at various points but it needs good business continuity planning, and I think we need to get on top of that.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

A personal opinion of mine is that a lot of online learning was happening but it was like guerrilla teaching, it was something that happened in the background and you had to get through our systems. I can remember doing it myself. What kind of happened is COVID came along and said: "Where is our online learning?" and then suddenly it was: "We really should sort this out." So there could be a real positive, if there is a positive from the pandemic, to say that we should have done this years ago. That is why I asked about the education reform programme and putting that into there. I know we are running out of time. Let us move on to talk about post-16. Minister, can you provide an update to the panel on the status of the post-16 strategy?

The Minister for Children and Education:

There are a number of key objections in there. Could I introduce Stuart Penn? It is his first time being at Scrutiny; he has never been here before so I thought I would bring him along. He is driving all of the post-16 strategy. Can I ask Stuart to give you an overview of where we have got to currently?

Operations Manager, Skills Jersey:

There has been quite a lot of development so what I have tried to do is make it simple and break it down by not only the key objectives but then key statements underneath, and give you an update on all of those as to what has been going on, and of course it is always going to be ongoing as well. So if I start with key objective number one, which is ensuring that Jersey has a highly-skilled

workforce that will maintain and boost its future economy. One of the main drivers for that was to be able to change and identify future required skills to be able to review and develop provisions. We made a fantastic coup just before the pandemic in that we managed to procure an L.M.I. (labour market information) system called My Insights which gave us live, up-to-date information about all the job vacancies being advertised in Jersey, and obviously then be able to backtrack and review what is going on. Not only though does it tell us that we were advertising for 70 head chefs during the middle of August last year, but it also breaks it down to what skills were being asked for in those job descriptions, which is brilliant, which led to our successful retraining fiscal stimulus provision that we put on, which basically meant that Highlands College and Digital Jersey Academy had courses that were available but did we know that they were the right courses? We did because they had to come via me and myself and the L.M.I. insights platform to check: "Okay, are these the skills that are being asked for? We want to make sure we are using this fiscal stimulus money correctly to upskill the current workforce to the current needs." We also had the ability with that system to look at, if you like, our future. So we have Edinburgh, I believe it was, and Brighton were the 2 main areas that the experts from the labour market information conglomerate said: "They are where you most likely are going to be in 5 years." With every futureproof there is always a little bit of a finger in the air, but it gives us an idea. So it enables us to be able to review and look at what are going to be the skills gaps potentially in 5 years, and start looking at our current provisions and how we move forward.

[11:45]

We have not just taken it off the shelf though and left it; we are developing it this year so that not only do we create a constant report that comes through, but also so that myself and my researchers can access it like that to dig into it and find out what are the current skills or what are the future skills, so we are developing the platform continuously to meet Jersey's needs and our skill needs. One question that came up; that was also the public sector. Well of course the public sector advertise jobs as well so we could do exactly the same with the public sector. We have increased our partnership work, which is a statement you are going to hear me saying a lot over the next few minutes so do tell me if it gets boring, but we have increased our partnership work with people and services and especially our organisational development team to put on and look at what are the needs of a growing and busy public sector. So we have created an internship, the first one ever to be run for the Government of Jersey, that is using fiscal stimulus money, however, we have now found a way of continuing that ongoing with current budgets within the departments. We have also been working a lot closer with the Government of Jersey People Services to look at their apprenticeship pathways because apprenticeships have been neglected in the public service. That is changing. Not only have we researched and launched 2 brand new apprenticeship pathways this year in commercial and procurement, so we have got apprenticeship pathways for commercial and

procurement now set up on-Island - the Government of Jersey are the first people to put people through but anyone is going to be able to access it - and also a cybersecurity apprenticeship. Both of those are high-level apprenticeships; rather than just thinking level 3 we have gone to a level 4 and above for those. We are looking at the apprenticeship model. Obviously we had an apprenticeship funding review that happened last year, the model was proposed and went to public consultation. There were quite a lot of changes that were then made from the public consultation to streamline it and make it a lot easier to understand as to what we are proposing. We are about to launch the March recruitment for apprenticeships with the new funding model, which is more equitable, whereas before the Government pot for funding for apprenticeships was a first come first served basis. We have now made it so that we are going to be putting percentages forward and everyone will be able to access that funding and it will not be a first come first served basis.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Those internships you mentioned; they are paid internships?

Operations Manager, Skills Jersey:

Yes, they are paid internships. That was very critical. We ran a pilot in 2019, and I think you might have got an intern, Senator. We ran the model back in 2019 that we used from Skills Jersey's budget as a pilot for one intern, and it was very important when we ran that internship for the Government of Jersey that it was paid, and we used the fiscal stimulus money to pay the wages. It was all we got from there. However, moving forwards we have found a way for each department to budget and make sure they have got wages for their interns. Are there any questions just on that first key objective before I jump on to the next one?

Senator T.A. Vallois:

The apprenticeships, I mean, we have had one very good apprenticeship with fleet management for years in terms of how they upskill and help mechanics, maintenance workers and all those types of things. I suppose my question is the transparency of this work that is going on and people understanding it, and the involvement of Economic Development in that. Because I hear sometimes it is Ministers or sometimes it is other members of the public, and especially now we are coming up to elections, people criticising that this, this, this and this has not been done. But how are you getting that out there, other than the people that are trying to access? Because there are people that want a career change, there are people that are looking at alternative ways of doing things, especially after COVID.

Operations Manager, Skills Jersey:

Over the last 12 months I would say it has been quite fortunate that I have been able to step up into a position where we can work closely with all the different parts that relate to skills, because skills are in everyone's portfolio, and I am not just talking about government departments but other ...

Senator T.A. Vallois:

Well Education is in everyone's portfolio.

Operations Manager, Skills Jersey:

But also out there in the Island itself, in the employer groups, we are in the Jersey Employer Group, we have all the different associations and federations and committees, and we have realised that skills for everyone needs to be a part of more partnership working, so we have raised our profile and raised our engagement across the piece with all these people. Simple examples; monthly meetings with the Department for the Economy to make sure all their sector leads are talking to me about skills and what we can do and develop, and that we are all looking at that labour market information so we are on track. If we are identifying apprenticeship needs anywhere, within the Government, within different industries out there, we are able to sort them and also promote them and make sure there is one message going out about: "These are the apprenticeship pathways that are available." Something we have done to help with that is, as you know, the Skills Show that we always run every year was always just a physical event up at the Fort, often seen as just for school children but it was always aimed at everyone. Because we had to move that online with the pandemic, we have got a fantastic resource there. It is live all year round; it has got local people uploading videos about their industries, about their careers, about their pathways as well. So it is not just a matter of my team trying to tell everyone what apprenticeships are available and what skills training is available.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

Are you thinking about maybe linking that to the jobs page on gov.je, because it is one of the most knocked on, people looking at it, so I just thought that extra resource is helpful?

Operations Manager, Skills Jersey:

Brilliant idea, because there are all sorts of different things on that Skills Show and we are making a real effort to get it into the schools so the teachers - not just the careers teachers - are able to know that if they are teaching something within science or maths that there is this online tool where they can pull up a local engineer talking about how they are using that science or maths out there on the Island now. But you are right, it should be on the jobs page too, especially as we have a student opportunity page set up now that is linked to the jobs page, which is where we offer not only internships and apprenticeships that are relevant to students, but any office, any industry or business in Jersey can come to us and say: "Right, I have got this project over the summer, it would be great

to have a Jersey student who would be willing to come and get on there” and it is an offer for them, whether it is paid or unpaid. So we have got a special student opportunities page now.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

With things like post-graduate work as well, one of the things I think needs looking at is post-graduate funding. We are losing a lot of our talent off the Island and they are going elsewhere, so that would be an interesting one. Those opportunities might be here.

Operations Manager, Skills Jersey:

They are definitely, and I can confirm we have just managed to establish - we have not recruited it yet - a H.E. (higher education) development role that we have been using as a sort of project management role in the short term because that is a key area we have got to look into. We need to look at higher education and by that I mean the relationships, the development, how we stay in touch with our students that go away off-Island to do their higher education learning. We have had this on the piece for a while. A couple of years ago we took the diaspora, we went out and found out why people do come back or do not come back to the Island. There was nothing there that we did not already know anecdotally but it has helped us to look at how can we improve our comms, how can we invest further in our Jersey graduates to help us benefit from them and make our workforce skilled up to the highest level. So hopefully that role then will be able to move forwards dramatically.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

I am conscious of time ...

Senator T.A. Vallois:

We are going to have to do a whole hearing on that.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Yes. Minister, can you update on the most recent review of the Jersey progression qualification as the response to the post-16 report? It was intended to be conducted annually.

The Minister for Children and Education:

Sorry, the post-16?

Senator T.A. Vallois:

The Jersey progression.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Yes, at Highlands.

The Minister for Children and Education:

Stuart, do we ...

Operations Manager, Skills Jersey:

I think I have got the information here.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

It is still running, the progression qualification. What I was going to ask you, Stuart, is regards T-levels as well. We do not know where they are going with the U.K. completely yet but they do seem to be pushing them along, and I know we cannot provide all of them but is there a link with T-levels and skills ... and for those people listening T-levels are sort of “academic” because I think it is unfair, but BTech, so it is that link between academic A-level and vocational qualification, so the sort of thing they have been doing in Europe for years. Is there any work on that?

Operations Manager, Skills Jersey:

There is indeed. Highlands College are working closely with the Edge Foundation in the U.K. who you will have come across, who look at everything to do with that area, skills, T-levels, to help influence when they are looking at their curriculum over here.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Do you believe there are opportunities to offer some of those here? Because we have particular parts of our economy, particularly if we diversify our economy a little; health would be one in particular I would have thought with your previous role, but also finance, technology, digital, caring. There are quite a few.

Operations Manager, Skills Jersey:

Yes, so what we are working with the Jersey Employer Group on is looking at each of their industries and trying to map a career pathway map over the top of it. So that is not just looking at what is currently on the Island in Jersey, but what are the other career pathways that work out there in the U.K. or other parts of the world that would fit in with our style. The idea with this piece is the Jersey Employer Group has got a representative from pretty much every industry and it is quite hands on, so we are working with them to create this pathway map. If you can imagine the jigsaw, each puzzle is going to be an industry and then the bigger picture is that we then plug all of those together like a big jigsaw where we can see transferrable skills. We will then go into the next skills level down, so not messing with the qualifications, we will have those on there in the pathways, but also what jobs are requiring which skills and where the transferrable skills are as well. For example, if we brought in a T-level we can see that the T-level and the skills related to that in finance maybe or health might

have transferrable skills with other areas. Again we are back to getting the best out of our workforce and being able to encourage lifelong learning and development.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

I think it is a good point about transferrable skills. Most people do not realise what they have.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

One of the arguments that we have made in the last election. Hospitality we are talking about are not just chefs, waiters; we have got H.R. (human resources), we have got management. That was a very clear message that came across.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

In terms of the progression qualification, has there been done a sort of review of where it is?

Operations Manager, Skills Jersey:

Sorry, let me just have a look.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

I will move on and you can ... when you get an answer. The panel recommended, that was accepted, the idea that information technology, a subject for students to study during key stage 4 as a compulsory subject, a required subject. Has anything been addressed with that?

Group Director, Education:

It has been discussed in the Curriculum Council. The panel will recall it was not compulsory that it had to be a G.C.S.E. subject but I.T. was available. That is something we have been working on at the school level. We would have to forward the panel an up-to-date report of the state of play for our advisory service or where we are because the COVID has just kicked into ...

Deputy R.J. Ward:

We recognise that COVID is ... it may be an advantage because people have had to become much more I.T. literate.

Group Director, Education:

I think we have become more I.T. literacy as your point and that is why ...

Operations Manager, Skills Jersey:

So it is in the brief for the partner that is going to help us develop a digital education strategy, and we approved a potential partner about a week and a half ago, so if it works, you are contracting, be

able to say: "It is this group" in a couple of weeks' time. But they have got that as one of their agenda items.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

Could I just clarify; digital education means what? I think this is really, really important because there have always been arguments about what kind of G.C.S.E. you do when it comes to computers and all those computer science, information technology, there are so many different variations. It would be really helpful because it is constantly changing.

The Minister for Children and Education:

So the work we are doing here with a partner will include Rory from Digital Jersey and the like, so it will be very much on the basis of what the I.T. curriculum should look like. It is not just about raspberry pi and coding, it will be about understanding the whole breadth of what digital work happens within the real world.

Programme Director, Education Reform:

What is taught, how it is taught, what does it mean for different groups of children, digital poverty is considered, so it is quite a broad basis of questions.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

There is a good definition of what digital means. At one of the hearings we had some time ago we asked and Digital Jersey gave a really good definition.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

I think it is great and ambitious to do it but I think the question is do we have the people to do it and do we have the skillset to do it, and that is really important as well. But you are going to have to take those teachers out of the school to upskill them because this is a constant changing thing, it is not like you just do one course and go: "I can do that for the next few years until the next one rolls around", it is literally changing year to year.

The Minister for Children and Education:

When you have trouble at home with your I.T. you ask your son; correct?

Senator T.A. Vallois:

Yes.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

I think that is why we made the recommendation in terms of putting it as a particular thing, because to assume that everyone has those skills in a particular nature is like saying everyone could teach literacy. It is not true. Different things; different people.

Group Director, Education:

There is a direct corollary; English is a compulsory subject up to 16, it is a subject in its own right, and it is the foundation, the tool, the means to which you write a biology assessment or a geography essay. I.T. is very similar in that it is a subject in its own right but it is an underpinning resource. The difference between English and I.T. is that I.T. is changing at such a rapid pace. I mean the English language evolves but the I.T. capability ... the independent school funding review had 6 policy options, we added digital in the broad sense because we felt it was a gap and if we were genuinely going to have reform we have to have high focus, which is why we are procuring a partner to lead that for us.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Just a couple of questions which link to the funding again. What has been developed in the mechanism for schools to operate a 3 or 5-year budget cycle? The recommendation had been addressed in the previous chief executive.

Programme Director, Education Reform

So we are starting 3 new projects, one of which is around strengthening financial governance in schools which includes that aspect of trying to plan for the future.

[12:00]

I do not know if the answer is 3-year rolling budgets or a degree of flexibility around underspend and overspends; that is part of our challenge.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Because that is an issue.

Programme Director, Education Reform

Agreed.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Particularly when our funding goes from January to December. The tax year goes to April and the academic year goes to June. The 3 things are always an absolute nightmare.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

You always feel quite a few months behind when it comes to the Government Plan.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

It is just a nightmare. You used to have to do budget deals with suppliers, but we will not go into that. Can I ask ...

Senator T.A. Vallois:

I think, Stuart, did you have an answer to the ...?

Operations Manager, Skills Jersey:

I have got the answer. It is quite a lot of text but if I give you the first couple of lines and then we can forward the rest to you just for the details. It is marked as completed which is why I was struggling to find it because I had to filter it back down, but it is subject to an annual review of amendments and updates. The qualification is also subject to external quality assurance processes set by the awarding body, which is the N.C.F.E. (Northern Council for Further Education), and follows a rigorous quality assurance framework and Q.A. (quality assurance) cycle at Highlands College. It then goes into some nice details about the percentage achieving in maths and English and all sorts. So if we send that to you there are some good things in there.

The Minister for Children and Education:

I think we will have to answer a lot of these in writing to you because of the time.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Let me just ask a couple of questions about the primary school meals project. One of the reasons for it being extended to the schools it was, was the facilities within the buildings. We know that the town schools, and I will say this of course because ... but also with the data of Pupil Premium we know that the town schools would never have had those facilities. We knew that from the beginning. So could we say that the town schools were always going to be precluded because of their lack of facilities?

The Minister for Children and Education:

Can I say that just because we have gone to the 2 schools we have has not slowed down any of the work about a rollout within the town schools because of the amount of work that needs to be done in that way, so it has not slowed it down or changed the aspects that we were going to go in that route. But going out to those schools (a) because we could do it, and (b) because it gives us better data was the reasons why we went in that direction.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Why is the data better?

The Minister for Children and Education:

So we can understand about delivering meals out to the countryside and we can put them in ... we have got to cook the food, we have got to deliver the food, we have got to make sure the servery keeps it hot, the health and safety, make sure we are not poisoning children by putting food out in an incorrect way. It helps us understand what the logistics of delivering to 25 schools across the whole Island would look like from a kitchen.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

So where is the kitchen, out of interest; is it in town?

The Minister for Children and Education:

No, it is out of town.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

It is out of town. So would that not have been the same sort of delivery process to the town schools?

The Minister for Children and Education:

Well it all gives us good data on building an effective model.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Right, but you said it gave us better data?

The Minister for Children and Education:

Yes, well there is an uptake level, so not all the parents took up the offer of school meals within schools, and through the educational programme there was better uptake year on year and better outcomes. Parents were saying children were asking for different types of food at home so they are broadening their horizons of what they eat and to healthier foods. So it is a great outcome for what is going on within the pilot and it is about building on that. But just because we could not do the town ones does not mean we should not do the country ones because the children on low incomes in the countryside deserve to have this service just as much.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Yes, of course they do but we are talking about a proportion of those children. So those children on Pupil Premium do not pay the £2.50 and those who are not on the Pupil Premium do pay £2.50. That is £12.50 a week for 5 meals; have there been any obstacles to those who are on the borderline

of that? Because I think what COVID has done is uncover that there is a layer of our population that is not on income support but are working and do not qualify, simple as that, that have struggled, really struggled in the last year or so because of a change in hours, because of ... and we are seeing more expense in terms of rents and fuel, et cetera, et cetera. Are you looking at that within the trial?

The Minister for Children and Education:

It is a pilot, so a pilot trying to get the good data to work out ... I am going to hand over ...

Deputy R.J. Ward:

And when you hand over can I ask: how long is this going to be a pilot? Because it seems to me, if I am honest, it has been successful so why pilot it? Just get on with it.

Male Speaker:

I will need to come back to you on that, Minister.

The Minister for Children and Education:

Yes, maybe we can get back on that data. But the pilots always start building on ... we are looking all the time that this has been going on at each school, where can we put a servery, could it be built in the current environment, if it does, what space does it need to take up? Does it need planning application to build an extension to open it in, which is quite a lot of them. What would that look like? During COVID when we had one-way systems around schools and school bubbles and masks in areas, would it be appropriate to start a building process within that school at the same time? No, it would not have. The costs were always going to be something we need to associate in there as well. Is there a kitchen big enough and the people that can provide the service to be able to cook 3,000 meals and then all of the servers to deliver them out? It is not something that is just easy to do.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

That is the question though; is it the work that you are doing on the schools in terms of town, the way you situate the schools? Are serveries or kitchens being included in that consideration?

Deputy R.J. Ward:

You just read my mind. It is quite a serious question because I know that there is always an issue with building a canteen at the right size for the entire school. It happened at secondary schools, built, and you cannot fit all the children in, so you end up with a nightmare of split lunches, which creates logistical problems. Your plans to have lessons across Island would probably be completely destroyed by split lunches, but we will not go into that now. We were going to ask about the school sites review. There are so many questions we have not got to so we will write to you and send you

the questions. There was something in one of the reports that talked about the merging of 2 schools; is that still on the cards? Is that being considered in the school sites review and how do these things link together?

The Minister for Children and Education:

We are considering all of the best options for how we do something within the bowl of St. Helier. At the moment until we can talk ... I do not want to say anything about anything that would cause any distress but if you want a briefing on all of that we can do that. Can we do it in private though please?

Deputy R.J. Ward:

So do you have the school sites review completed now?

The Minister for Children and Education:

I have got it to the point where I have got it agreed with the Chief Minister. We need to now take it to the R.S.G. (Regeneration Steering Group).

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Sorry, R.S.G.?

The Minister for Children and Education:

Regeneration Steering Group.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

When would we be likely to see that and will it be for the bridging Island Plan debate?

The Minister for Children and Education:

I do not have control over what goes on at the Regeneration Steering Group. Trying to get to see the Chief Minister has been a struggle, but I have asked for it to be at the next R.S.G. I do not get to choose whether that is going to happen or not.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

Can I just challenge this just slightly? Is it the Minister for Children and Education's report or is it the Chief Minister's report? Whose report is it, because you have corporate sole so you are able to take that report forward if it is yours to do so.

The Minister for Children and Education:

I have put forward a report that I went and spoke to the Chief Minister about to get his approval on it to go forward, because it is not just about ...

Senator T.A. Vallois:

So it does not need to go to Regeneration Steering Group then?

The Minister for Children and Education:

It does because it is about St. Helier, so the people on the Regeneration Steering Group also are stakeholders with all of this. I cannot say it is going there and it is done, as the Minister for Education ...

Senator T.A. Vallois:

But the Regeneration Steering Group was set up around S.o.J.D.C. (States of Jersey Development Company), so it just seems a whole lot of bureaucracy to get a report out that probably says not very much.

The Minister for Children and Education:

It needs to go and hit the right ... we could go out publicly and say we are going to do this and then the Constable of St. Helier says: "No, we are not going to."

Senator T.A. Vallois:

But will it say we are going to do something or is it going to say we are going to do another review?

The Minister for Children and Education:

No, it is going to say we are going to do something. I want clear action on this.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Have you seen the school review?

The Minister for Children and Education:

Yes.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Do you think it fits well with the bridging Island Plan?

The Minister for Children and Education:

Yes.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

It does fit well with the bridging Island Plan?

The Minister for Children and Education:

Yes. I think you will like it, Chair. A lot.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Well it would be nice to know what it is, would it not?

The Minister for Children and Education:

I can do it in private.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Okay.

The Minister for Children and Education:

We can talk about it. I just do not want to create ...

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Okay, we have run out of time. We have gone over by 5 minutes. So we will send you other questions in writing. Thank you for your time and thank you, Stuart. You should have been here years ago.

[12:09]