

STATES OF JERSEY



SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS (S.R.3/2015): RESPONSE OF THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, SPORT AND CULTURE

**Presented to the States on 7th September 2015
by the Minister for Education, Sport and Culture**

STATES GREFFE

SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS (S.R.3/2015): RESPONSE OF THE MINISTER
FOR EDUCATION, SPORT AND CULTURE

Ministerial Response to: S.R.3/2015

Ministerial Response required by: 22nd September 2015

Review title: Special Education Needs

Scrutiny Panel: Education and Home Affairs

INTRODUCTION

I would like to convey my thanks to the Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel for undertaking this review. The report is constructive, and the findings and recommendations are broadly in line with the Education Business Plan 2015.

FINDINGS

	Findings	Comments
1.	4.7 Key Finding: The general provision of Special Educational Needs support in Jersey is of a very high standard.	I am delighted that the very high standard of work has been recognised by the Panel.
2.	5.19 Key Finding: The legislation and policies relating to SEN in Jersey provide a suitable framework for the provision of a high quality service.	I am pleased that the current law and policies have been identified by the Panel as a suitable framework for the provision of a high quality service.
3.	5.26 Key Finding: Parents do not understand the system.	This finding has been noted.
4.	5.29 Key Finding: The Department should use outside organisations to reduce the cost and widen access to expertise in some areas of SEN.	I will continue to explore opportunities with outside organisations to complement existing services.
5.	6.12 Key Finding: For teachers, recent SEN policy has proved challenging and may have intruded in the provision of high quality teaching.	This finding has been noted.
6.	6.19 Key Finding: Introduction of new policies would benefit from consultation at an early stage.	I acknowledge that the timing of consultation with all stakeholders is important.
7.	6.29 Key Finding: Training of staff at all levels requires more attention than it currently receives.	I am pleased to report that a comprehensive training programme for staff is in place for September 2015.

	Findings	Comments
8.	7.3 Key Finding: The Panel has had to disregard much information received on the grounds that it is historical.	I acknowledge and understand this finding.
9.	7.13 Key Finding: Information is not getting to the parents.	I have noted this finding.
10.	7.18 Key Finding: There is a need for Parent Partnership Officers, as specific posts with responsibilities to liaise with parents and work closely with them, with sufficient coverage for all children age groups.	This issue has been recognised by my Department and is a key action within the Education Business Plan 2015.
11.	8.3 Key Finding: There are several initiatives that the Minister could engage in, which would involve minimal cost but increase support and communication significantly to parents.	I have noted the finding and the report from 'Real Group Ltd.'. The report has been useful to my Department and has led to actions within the Education Business Plan 2015.

RECOMMENDATIONS

	Recommendations	To	Accept/Reject	Comments	Target date of action/ completion
1.	6.30 RECOMMENDATION: The Minister for ESC must increase the consultation and training provision for teachers and key workers in relation to the provision of SEN.	Min. for ESC	Accept	An extensive training provision for teachers and key workers is in place for September 2015.	September 2015
2.	7.14 RECOMMENDATION: The Minister for ESC must improve lines of communication with parents of SEN children.	Min. for ESC	Accept	This is contained within the families section of the Education Business Plan 2015. Page 25, Action 30: <i>30. Establish effective arrangements to communicate and engage with parents and other key stakeholders, ensuring they are aware of key services in their communities and how to access them (2015–16).</i>	September 2016

	Recommendations	To	Accept/ Reject	Comments	Target date of action/ completion
3.	8.4 RECOMMENDATION: The Minister for ESC must engage in initiatives to provide appropriate forums to support parents of SEN children.	Min. for ESC	Accept	<p>This is contained within the families section of the Education Business Plan 2015.</p> <p>Page 25, Actions 29, 30, 33 and 34:</p> <p>29. <i>Collaborate with other government departments to improve significantly multi-agency working and enhance services for families and their children (2015–18):</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Pool resources and personnel to make a greater and earlier impact on the Island’s most vulnerable families.</i> • <i>When planning to meet the needs of vulnerable Islanders, States services to learn from and make use of the knowledge schools have of their communities and local families.</i> <p>30. <i>Establish effective arrangements to communicate and engage with parents and other key stakeholders, ensuring they are aware of key services in their communities and how to access them (2015–16).</i></p> <p>33. <i>Review the allocation of resources and the job descriptions of current staff (in the department and schools) to switch the department’s default position from focusing on individual children to focusing on the family as a whole (2015–18).</i></p> <p>34. <i>Learn from and extend existing family-focused work (2015–16).</i></p>	September 2018

CONCLUSION

I am pleased that the Panel has recognised that the provision of SEN in Jersey is of a very high standard.

My Department is committed to developing and implementing the policies that support their work and this is reflected in the Education Business Plan 2015. Therefore, I accept that the Panel's recommendations will have a positive impact and help us develop further.