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11<sup>th</sup> September 2020

Dear Senator Ferguson,

Thank you for the opportunity to express my views about the management for the Government's estate. My viewpoint is quite specific as I am the headteacher of a primary school in St. Helier that was deemed to be in the lowest category when schools' state of repair was assessed several years ago. I have felt a degree of frustration about this as I have seen wonderful new buildings being constructed in other catchments, but as yet we have not similarly benefited, despite there being a rare opportunity staring us all in the face in the form of the vacant police station site adjoining us.

I appreciate that maintaining the portfolio of buildings the Government is responsible for is expensive and needs have to be prioritised, however, Rouge Bouillon is a school with quite possibly the most challenging catchment on the island, with 50% of our children qualifying for Jersey Premium and just over 72% speaking English as an additional language. The housing in our catchment is some of the poorest in Jersey, often with no outside space, and consequently the Health Survey has repeatedly shown our pupils to have the highest BMI of the island's primary schools.

As Jersey proudly asserts that we put children first and the outcomes of the Care Enquiry and Children's Plan speak to prioritising equity, it seems counter-intuitive that Rouge Bouillon remains a school that has not had significant investment.

We have a fantastic staff and wonderful children and we do the very best we can with the circumstances we have, but surely it is not right that the children most in need of space to run about and play sport go to a school with no playing field or green space. We have a specialist unit for children with Autism and communication difficulties, but not a single space for parents to park in order to bring these highly needy children into school, or enable parents to meet the staff at the end of the day. We are a school that burned down about 30 years ago, but although the main fire escape has been identified as needing refurbishment or replacement for several years, the project has been repeatedly cancelled.

The Children's Plan describes how your educational outcomes should not be pre-determined by your starting points or your socio-economic background, and that we need to have the highest aspirations for the neediest children. It seems wrong therefore that when Rouge Bouillon has so many of the children we should be prioritising, they are catered for in a building with so many leaks and out of date

facilities; the culture of pride and excellence we are trying to create is undermined by a physical environment which suggests that mediocre, at best, will do.

I have been grateful for the efforts of Jersey Property Holdings this year to paint part of the exterior of the school, and to renovate the worst of the toilets, however, these relatively small sticking plasters are dwarfed by what needs to be done to give our children the standard of facilities enjoyed by children at some of the more fortunate schools.

I have been assured that we have not been forgotten and that we are in line for renovation or a rebuild at some point, however, the old police station site next door has stood vacant for several years, and although we have been told that we are being considered as potential beneficiaries of this opportunity, there does not seem to be a timescale or plan- though perhaps I am just unaware of it.

I know that our experience is only a small part of the wider picture, however, it does seem to me that it is an example of where the Government's stated policies have not seemed to be translated into an integrated, wholistic management plan to realise them.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R Price'.

Russell Price