



STATES OF JERSEY

Education and Home Affairs Panel

School Examination Results

FRIDAY, 25th MARCH 2011

Panel:

Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier of St. Saviour (Chairman)
Deputy T.M. Pitman of St. Helier (Vice Chairman)
Deputy J.M. Maçon of St. Saviour

Witnesses:

Deputy J.G. Reed of St. Ouen (The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture)
Mr. M. Lundy (Director, Education, Sport and Culture)
Mr. J. Westwater (Head of Planning and Projects, Education, Sport and Culture)
Mr. G. Jones (Professional Adviser, Education, Sport and Culture)

In Attendance:

Mr. W. Millow (Scrutiny Officer)

[12:01]

Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier of St. Saviour (Chairman):

First of all I would like to welcome you all to this session and I hope that running it here as opposed to the scrutiny room is a more comfortable environment because we are rather squashed in that room. In terms of the etiquette and protocols I am afraid to people perhaps new to this it can come across as rather rigid in the sense that all the questioning is done by the panel, so if you think that we are totally off the point or we are totally barmy, obviously most Members fall into that category, in terms of our questioning I am afraid that is the way the system runs. The witnesses may wish to speak to us informally after if there are any issues you have but that is a separate sort of thing. The other thing is I have been asked if the proceedings can be videoed and sometimes they are but that is dependent on the assent of the witnesses, and they do not agree to that so there will be no videoing of these proceedings. So I thank people for raising that. We have got 2 hours scheduled but if the Minister speaks very fast or for some reason we feel that we have reached the end, not the end but we have reached the end of what we can usefully discuss it will come to an end. If not we will today - unlike last night where the witness valiantly

carried on for 2 hours - have a short break at 1.00 p.m. Not for you to go and get a 6-course meal or anything, just a short break. Is that okay?

Male Speaker:

That would be great, thank you.

Deputy R.G. Le Hérisier:

I think that is it. So I do not know if our transcriber is ready? We will officially start the meeting now, which means we press the button and they are transcribing it, and by the way the script, and some of you who could not be here yesterday may wish to obviously read Mr. Mills' contribution, that will be available in about 10 days on the website, on the Scrutiny website, www.je, go to States Assembly/Scrutiny, go into Scrutiny and look for Education and Home Affairs and it will be on the website. So it is a bit late but I am sure you have been briefed. Okay, I am Roy Le Hérisier, Chairman of the panel and Deputy of St. Saviour.

Deputy J.M. Maçon of St. Saviour:

Deputy Jeremy Maçon, representative of Petite Longueville of the Parish of St. Saviour.

Deputy T.M. Pitman of St. Helier (Vice Chairman):

Deputy Trevor Pitman, St. Helier No. 1, Vice Chairman.

Mr. W. Millow (Scrutiny Officer):

William Millow, Scrutiny Officer.

Deputy R.G. Le Hérisier:

Okay, and I shall ask the witnesses if they would introduce themselves?

Head of Planning and Projects, Education, Sport and Culture:

Jim Westwater, Head of Planning and Projects at Education, Sport and Culture.

Professional Adviser, Education, Sport and Culture:

Graham Jones, currently working as a Senior Adviser for Education, Sport and Culture on accountability structures.

Deputy J.G. Reed of St. Ouen (The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture):

Deputy James Reed, the Minister for Education, Sport and Culture.

Director, Education, Sport and Culture:

Mario Lundy, Director of Education, Sport and Culture.

Deputy R.G. Le Hérisier

We have another possible witness who may ...

Director, Education, Sport and Culture:

These are the witnesses.

Deputy R.G. Le Hérisier:

These are the witnesses? Okay, good. Well, I would like to welcome our witnesses and the format is we will go through questions ... they have been given, in terms of the areas of questioning, to the witnesses. Harking back to that wonderful line from Eric Morecambe, we will hit the right notes but not necessarily in the right order, because obviously as it proceeds and you may have noticed this last night, although we were fairly disciplined last night, believe it or not, we obviously get overlaps in questioning and so forth and then we have to hurry up. So I do apologise to the witnesses but I think it is pretty evident what the general areas will be from the debate that has already taken place in the media. So I do apologise if we do a bit of jumping but that is just to speed things along. Okay, let us start with a broad-ranging question and ask the Minister what in his view is the fundamental purpose or purposes of education, first of all?

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

First of all I would like to refer the panel to both the Strategic Plan, priority 12 and the E.S.C. (Education, Sport and Culture) 2011 Business Plan, both of which have been approved and are supported by the States. Our vision and aims are described in the 2011 Business Plan and they are: "To ensure that our children enjoy the best start possible, prepare our young people for the challenges of the future and encourage them to make a positive contribution to society, encourage lifelong learning and active participation in sport and culture and promote social inclusion and equal opportunity."

Deputy R.G. Le Hérisier:

Okay. Do you think, Mr. Minister, those purposes are all compatible with each other?

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

Absolutely, and I think that without a combination of all our community would be much poorer.

Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:

Okay. Where in that list, Mr. Minister, do you put preparation of people for employment?

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

I think that it is a strand that is throughout our education system. We are wanting to prepare young people for adult life and with adult life comes employment.

Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:

Okay. Any follow up to that?

Deputy T.M. Pitman:

Yes, I would like to take on from that question and ask how much is the pressure really about forcing square pegs into round holes for obviously a small jurisdiction limited employment market? How much does that pressure transfer to you and your team to guide young people in a certain way?

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

I think the first thing is that our primary aim is to maximise the potential of every individual and provide a learning experience that suits that individual. We also acknowledge that within the cohort of young people in our care we have a wide range of individuals with equally a wide range of abilities and our educational curriculum is designed to meet their needs. We acknowledge that although we have some major industries that operate on the Island we also need plumbers and electricians and other individuals to support our community. What we try and do as a department is ensure that that contribution that is made by the individual is valued, whether it be as an M.D. (Managing Director) of a trust company or a bank or the individual that comes to take care of people's gardens.

Deputy T.M. Pitman:

To take on to Deputy Le Hérissier's point, is it compatible to have the sort of pressures on focusing on particular areas in employment like these young people's aspirations, can they be balanced equally? I mean when you talk about strategic aims, are young people first or do they come second into what is going to fit in with society and the needs of employers?

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

Well, I suggest that our responsibility is that young people absolutely come first and it would be wrong to think otherwise. We are obviously aware that those young people need to participate in our community and so we need to prepare them for that prospect. That includes a wide range of

activities, not solely academic ones. It may be that my director would choose to add to that comment.

Director, Education, Sport and Culture:

Well, I can only tell you what the curriculum tries to achieve. It provides a broad and balanced education for young people. It is designed to turn them into successful citizens. Successful citizens are usually lifelong learners so we want to develop the skills of lifelong learning, it is not just about knowledge, and we want to ensure that young people are able to transfer those skills so that they can be successful in a range of occupations because the world has changed and it is unlikely that people will be in the same occupation for the whole of their lives. So successful independent citizens, that is good for the individual and it is good for society.

Deputy R.G. Le Hérisier:

As you know, Mr. Lundy or Mr. Minister, one of the big arguments put forward yesterday was this is all excellent and cannot be vouchsafed, but basically in order to survive in the working world you need to be able to read, you need numeracy and in fact you need other skills as well and at the moment, for good or for bad, society has got measurements that are acknowledged as being the measurements, i.e. G.C.S.E.s (General Certificate of Secondary Education) or A levels or degrees. Do you accept that these are valid measurements for employers to use when they assess the suitability of people?

Director, Education, Sport and Culture:

I accept that a range of measures needs to be used if you are going to judge the performance of schools and judge the educational standards of individuals. However I do not agree that one single measurement gives you an accurate view of how individuals are developing or indeed how schools are performing.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

If the Minister would like to address that, I believe the point was G.C.S.E.s used by employers in order to judge someone on their employability, does the Minister politically think that that is a valid judgment?

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

I believe the employers, as my Director has already said, use a number of measurements to determine the employability of an individual and it is equally important that the individuals have developed what I would call the soft skills which include timekeeping, responsibility, the ability to work as a team and contribute positively to the particular business that they are being chosen to

work in. So again the employer is bound to look at academic achievement but I would suggest that the employer does not necessarily just focus on the A* to C grading. They are interested in whether the individual has achieved success in G.C.S.E.s or A levels or any other particular qualification that suits that business.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

Where do you get that opinion from, Minister?

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

As an employer myself I have experienced it firsthand and equally I have many other individuals and friends that have expressed that view to me. I also as one of my responsibilities form part of the Skills Executive and work very closely with the Skills Board who are a group of businessmen who offer their time free to support the further development of vocational training, and obviously an academic curriculum, to ensure that the individuals that we are presenting to go into the workplace have the correct skills for the job in hand.

Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:

Mr. Minister, do they feel that the foundation in a way must be, for example, maths and reading and writing skills? Do they feel that, and if they feel that, do they feel that the system here is adequate in that regard? What feedback do you get from them?

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

I would suggest that you should them yourself, but certainly there is always a drive to improve numeracy and literacy and it is something the department acknowledges and continues to promote. With regards to maths and English we encourage all 16 year-olds within our education system to take those exams and for the most part they are extremely successful in getting a pass. It is not to say that they all manage to arrive in the A to C band, but equally for many individuals achieving a pass in maths and English is a success in itself.

Director, Education, Sport and Culture:

Can I just add that it is crucial that young people develop the basic skills, no question about it. Those basic skills are generally measured by the English education system at age 16. That does not mean that academic achievement stops at age 16. Some young people need more support, need more time in order to gain those qualifications and in terms of having an expectation that pupils will achieve A* to C, of course you must start out with that expectation, you must have high expectations for students, but at the same time if realistically every student was going to achieve

an A* to C you would not need grades D, E, F and G which are there to recognise the lower levels of achievement. Level 1 qualifications are D to G, level 2 qualifications are A to C.

Deputy T.M. Pitman:]

Can I just take on from what you have said there, Mr. Director? Why then are all students entered for G.C.S.E.s in English and maths? Is there not a negative possibility of outcome to that for those young people who are going to fail or seem to academically fail?

Director, Education, Sport and Culture:

Well, for 2 reasons. Number one, because we have a high expectation for all students and number 2 because English and maths are very basic skills that people need to master to whatever degree is within their capability. But the stats will also show you I think something like over 99 per cent of our students who are entered for English and maths gain an A* to G, so we believe that students are capable of getting a grade somewhere on that grade ladder.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

Minister, from your work on the Skills Executive can you elaborate on how employers see grades E, F and G?

[12:15]

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

I think again it depends on the particular job that the applicant is applying for. I would like to just point out education does not stop at 16. In fact 92 per cent, I will repeat that, 92 per cent, of all our young people remain in education until they are 18 and an additional large majority of youngsters continue into further education. Sixteen is simply a point in one's learning experience and for the most part employers would not necessarily look to employ people at 16 years of age.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

Then from a consumer point of view how do you think parents and students perceive grades E, F and G?

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

We aim to celebrate the success of every individual. We are also aware that we have many individuals within our education system for whom English is not their first language. For many of these students success is measured in different ways and for some achieving a pass in G.C.S.E. is a huge achievement for them, and we acknowledge that. We celebrate that annually within our

school system, whether it is within our fee-paying schools or indeed in our 11 to 16 schools. I believe that is the right and correct approach.

Deputy R.G. Le Hérisier:

We are putting in a sense the devil's advocate arguments here, obviously we do not agree with everything that is implicit in what we are saying but we feel these arguments have to be put forward. I was interested in what the director said about we go down to G and that is regarded as, in a sense, good if people get anywhere on that scale, but could the director say to what extent does that reflect functioning literacy and numeracy? Secondly, in the light of what Deputy Maçon has said, how does the director think an employer sees an applicant who is below C?

Director, Education, Sport and Culture:

That is an interesting challenge, Chairman, because many educationalists will tell you that a G.C.S.E. in English and maths does not reflect the level of skills that employers might require in those subjects. In fact some of our youngsters when they move on to Highlands College and some of our schools now are looking at other examinations such as adult literacy and numeracy which reflect more accurately the skills that employers want. So I think my caveat would be that while English and maths at G.C.S.E. is a measure of literacy and numeracy as far as the English Government is concerned, it is not necessarily an accurate measurement of skills in those areas.

Deputy R.G. Le Hérisier:

But why, if you have these doubts, are you entering virtually all pupils for G.C.S.E.s?

Director, Education, Sport and Culture:

Well, because your G.C.S.E.s are your standard qualifications and both students and employers I guess want to see how young people measure up against those standards. We are developing and broadening those standards, we are looking at vocational options. We are looking at qualifications in adult literacy and numeracy and we are trying to ensure that the breadth of qualifications that a young person comes out of school or college with reflect not only the standards in those areas but also their other talents which often do not get recognised when schools or colleges apply a narrow curriculum.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

On that point, if I may ask, how does the department communicate, explain, these other qualifications and their levels to employers? For example, G.C.S.E.s have been around for a while and some may argue they are quite reductionistic in what they do. When you have got

other qualifications how well does the department translate what that qualification is to an employer?

Director, Education, Sport and Culture:

Well, until this year it was communicated in terms of equivalents, because if a young person undertook a vocation qualification, for example, a B.Tech, then when the school results were calculated and the pupil's individual results were calculated then the B.Tech could be converted to a G.C.S.E. equivalent and the same was for other qualifications. So the 5 A* to C for example might be perceived by most people as simply a reflection of an academic set of qualifications but within that there could have been vocational qualifications. Now the English Government has changed that, so going forward those vocational qualifications may not be recognised as part of the A* to C, so there is a great need now for us to communicate more clearly with local employers as to what that will mean for us. It is also an indicator of a significant vulnerability for you as politicians because quite clearly every time there is a change of U.K. (United Kingdom) Government you are vulnerable to having your education policy in Jersey changed without you taking a view on it.

Deputy T.M. Pitman:

Can I take that on and say that in the long run would you then concede that while you are obviously not going to agree with Mr. Mills' conclusions, that what he has done has helped bring some of these issues into the public eye and it gives you an opportunity to explain to parents, to employers, how the system really works? Because I would suggest that something good can come from this.

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

I am pleased that you add some good can come from this, because at the moment I feel that we have heard a view being expressed by a certain individual that I believe does not reflect the Island's view or the department's view on the importance of education. Mr. Mills has chosen to focus on one narrow performance measurement and ignores all the efforts being made both by the schools and the individuals themselves as they progress through their learning experience. I think that we also do not accept that parents or Islanders as a whole have any major concerns about the education that we are providing. In fact I would say just the opposite, that those who have experienced the education and who have children within our education system have never raised this concern with us. There is always a need to improve standards and that is recognised by the department and that is our aim. I think it is distracting, to say the very least, to focus on a requirement to present league tables which do not recognise the selective nature of our education system, that the Island has adopted. This is the Island's choice of an education system and one

individual has chosen to challenge that. That is fine, we know and we are prepared and have been preparing for a proper and open debate on the future of education. We know that there are questions that need to be asked about some of the issues that schools and parents and children are faced with. That debate will happen. It will be an informed debate. It is not going to be driven by individuals with particular agendas.

Deputy T.M. Pitman:

With due respect though, Minister, is it credible to say that none of these concerns have been put to departments or yourself as Minister by parents? I am sorry, but that beggars belief.

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

It is credible. I have been a Minister for 2 and a half years and I believe that I can certainly count on 2 hands the individuals who have contacted me expressing concerns about their child's education. I would also like to say, more importantly, that following learning of those concerns the department has done everything possible to address them. That is what I believe the actions of a proactive and responsible department to be, not one that sits back on its laurels, not one that ignores the concerns of individuals, but equally recognises that we have a community made up of individuals of all sorts of different abilities and coming from all sorts of different backgrounds and we value them all.

Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:

One of the points made by Mr. Mills, Mr. Minister, was that he was very keen to see parents empowered, parents playing a big role. Maybe he developed that argument further than some people would want, he talked a lot about parental choice in terms of moving between schools and so forth, which we know poses problems in the Jersey context, but he wants to see parents empowered, he wants to see them playing a big role through the governors and through their own mechanisms in the ways in which schools are run. Are you saying that because parents have not come to you, for example, that everything is okay?

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

No, I am not saying that. In fact why on earth would I be proposing to enter into a major consultation over the future of education if I did not believe that there were some issues that needed to be dealt with? Tell me.

Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:

What are the issues in secondary education from your point of view, if they are not partly to embrace this issue?

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

This is a side issue. First of all we have a unique education system that is not replicated in the U.K. We have 41 per cent, roughly, of our young people in fee-paying education. We also have a 14 plus transfer system that supports and provides the higher achievers with the opportunities to excel in the academic areas. But this presents certain challenges to our 11 to 16 schools who I might add are preparing all the youngsters to move forward into G.C.S.E.s and A levels and further education and who provide and support the individuals who move into Hautlieu so the suggestion that these schools are not performing appropriately or properly is ridiculous, because if that was the case we would not have the success and celebrate the success of the students who enter Hautlieu, for instance. So picking up on the point of parent power, I believe parents have the power. They have the ability to make informed choice.

Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:

So what are they telling you at the moment?

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

They are able to visit all schools, our policy as a department and that of schools is an open door policy that allows parents who want to explore and understand what schools are providing and the learning opportunities that are available to their children, they are able to do that. We have Parent Teacher Associations linked to many of the schools who represent the parents of students within those schools. We also have governing bodies who are individuals who oversee the school, the performance, and deal with any issues that arise. So I think we should have confidence in the fact that parents are represented. There might be a need for further involvement and that is part of the discussions that we will have in the future months.

Director, Education, Sport and Culture:

Chairman, could I just clarify a point on parents because each governing body in Jersey exists as parent representatives. It is true to say that the powers and authorities of governing bodies in Jersey are different than they are in the U.K. Where the governing body of the school is the employer, the States of Jersey is the employer. Where the budgets are delegated to the governing body, the budgets obviously are overseen by the States of Jersey and authority is delegated to the head teacher to use them. So if you want to move to a system that empowers parents, schools and governors even more than today then you would need to consider putting those authorities and those powers out into your schools and then you would have to consider whether in a jurisdiction this size that was an efficient and effective use of resources.

Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:

Sorry, then I will let Deputy Pitman in, but it strikes me what the Minister was saying, Mr. Director, is that he has not heard from many people saying that things are bad. That does not have to have a wholesale transfer of powers. Have people been speaking to you about the system? What have they been telling you?

Director, Education, Sport and Culture:

What I can say is we do not generally get concerns from parents about standards and achievement. As with any jurisdiction and any school parents often have concerns about their own child, maybe a bullying situation, maybe relationships with other children, something that has happened in school. Of course those complaints come through and they are probably coming through about as frequently as they would in any jurisdiction, but generally we do not get concerns about low standards in our schools from parents.

[12:30]

Deputy T.M. Pitman:

I am glad to hear our director say that, given I chaired the Suspensions Review where it has to be said there were people, parents, who were very concerned with where their child was going to end up, so I am glad to see you acknowledge that. However, as the Minister has touched on and highlighted the 41 per cent et cetera in fee-paying schools, would it be fair to say in your view, as some teachers have said to me, that the situation we have now is almost the only place you could end up because our system is pretty unique? We are taking 41 per cent into fee-paying schools, we are creaming off some of the most academically capable at 14. Could we be anywhere else? Has perhaps Mr. Mills given you the chance to highlight that and take it on and debate what should have been debated some years ago, the full future of education in the Island? I do not remember the debate, nor Deputy Maçon of course because we are just young men, but Deputy Le Hérissier will obviously remember the blood bath that did take place.

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

The States and the Island as a whole has recognised that there is a need to provide parents with choice and that is why we have the education system that is currently operating on the Island. I believe that that is what the Island still expects, however this will be tested when we have the discussion around the future of education. If the view of the Islanders is that changes should be made then obviously they will be considered but I, at the moment, do not necessarily believe that there is a great desire to see any major change.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

Yes, Minister, you commented that G.C.S.E. league tables, the results were a side issue. I think many of your critics would disagree with you, however if we move on to the question then who collates and analyses exam result statistics for the Island's schools?

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

Very well. This information is collected by Jim Westwater who happens to be with us today, one of the department's officers, and it is used to both challenge the schools and also celebrate the successes of those schools. I would just ask Jim to perhaps explain further about some of the work that he undertakes.

Head of Planning and Projects, Education, Sport and Culture:

Surely. The examination results are collated on the mainland by the National Confederation for Examination Results. It is an organisation that collates and collects all the Examination Board's work, puts them in one database and then separates it out to give to each region. So we receive Jersey's results but no one else's. We do have access to U.K. results and to England results. The analysis is done by using a program, some software that is supplied by N.C.E.R. (National Confederation for Examination Results), it is called E.P.A.S. (Educational Performance and Analysis System) and is a system that we use to analyse and break down these results. The results come in many standard forms. In the U.K. there are some obligations that schools have whereby they must give parents certain results. Some of these are pre-programmed reports and geared to that end, so that they know by pressing this button parents will have what they are legally entitled to. We can go beyond that, we can do whatever we wish. What we cannot do is tamper with results. The results that are there are locked in and we cannot change them and we cannot change the methodology by which they are calculated. I can break things down into individual schools, into gender, into subject, into school. We can do it any way you wish but we have full control over what we bring out. What we do not have control over is what goes in.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

Minister, you commented that these results are used to challenge schools. In your time can you give an example of how you have challenged a school? Can you provide an example?

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

The schools are continually challenged and I think that it might be useful for Graham Jones, who is responsible for the professional partnering and the monitoring of our schools, to explain further how we go about it.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

Just before you do that, can you explain what a professional partner is, how they are appointed and the process?

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

Again I think it would probably be easier if Graham Jones addressed this point, so, Graham?

Professional Adviser, Education, Sport and Culture:

My position here is I am based in the U.K. but I am working over here on a contract, so my view is to bring a U.K. or an English view to Jersey. Now part of that process is to look at the accountability structures that Jersey already has and compare that to the accountability structures that England has and the U.K. has and other parts of the world. One of the ways that is done is to use a range of indicators to hold a school to account. In England you have Ofsted, you have a thing called S.I.P. (School Improvement Partners). Jersey has a scheme called Professional Partners which is similar, it is probably between Ofsted and the S.I.P.s whereby a person from the department goes into each school each term and holds a professional conversation around a fixed agenda. There are 4 agendas. One is leadership, one is achievement, another one is about teaching and learning standards and another one is about the relationship with the community. One of those agendas is standards, so the professional partners will hold a school to account on its standards. It will hold a school to account on 3, 4, 5, 6 approaches. Whatever the school has, that will be analysed. So for example you will look against national standards in the U.K. and you will say: "How well are you doing?" You will also look at a concept that some people find quite difficult to follow which is called Value Added. If you replace Value Added with the word "progress" it is a simple straightforward statement, what progress do pupils make against their ability levels and against where they ought to be for a pupil of that age? So once a year one of those meetings is held in great detail. The schools provide that evidence base, the schools have that conversation. They grade their performance, it is moderated by the professional partner scheme which in turn is moderated by external Ofsted inspectors from a company called Serco which is an Ofsted company. They will go into schools separately and confirm those judgments. We have another layer on top of that which is often an Island-wide review or a whole school review which will also hold that into account. So we have got 4 layers of accountability about standards. So when you are holding a conversation about standards in the school, there are 4 layers of that process and it happens every term. If I could just add to that, I am sorry to go on, but I have set the scene for you, people talk about the rigour of U.K. It is not, it is not rigorous. Ofsted can go into a school once every 5 years and spend one day based on data, it is simply looking at data. Currently Ofsted are reviewing the whole of their inspection procedure because they have found that many schools have had the wool pulled over their eyes, or many inspectors

have, simply because of the way data is manipulated. So this system is a lot more rigorous than the Ofsted approach. It is far more regular and that is how the schools are held to account for data.

Deputy R.G. Le Hérisier:

Mr. Mills might contend then, and I seem to be putting words into his mouth but obviously we have got to test out his views, he would contend that it is not sufficient just to say we have looked at Value Added and these students are doing very well given the liabilities and the issues that they bring to school. We should be much more proactive than that, we should say to a school: "Look, if you have got this number of students who are not passing A to C, if you have that number you have got to be very proactive, you have got to come up with a programme" and you should simply not rest on your laurels and say: "Well, that is how it relates to previous schools et cetera." So how would you answer his challenge?

Professional Adviser, Education, Sport and Culture:

Well, what we are applying on the Island is exactly the same as the Ofsted criteria, so the system is different but the criteria is the same. I did work for Ofsted and I am a very experienced Ofsted inspector, I have lead over 60, I have got experience of over 200 Ofsted inspections, so I know the system backwards. I was a part of the Government's think tank on changes to Ofsted, so I know the whole of the process from both sides. When you go in and inspect a school you do not look at one measure. You cannot look at one measure. You have to look at a whole range of measures. Now the Ofsted framework is this thick and it has that number of measures in it to go through. So one of the measures for example is National Standards, a very important measure, A to C and so on. But there is also Value Added and what you do as an Ofsted inspector is you make a judgment. So you do not say one or the other, you make a judgment on both. So you can have a very high performing school, there is a school and I will not mention a name, in Devon, a grammar school, a very high-performing grammar school that has very low Value Added, that is the pupils go in but they do not make much progress. They go in because they are very able but the school does not add very much to it. we have schools on this Island that have very high standards but also add a great deal of value to that process as well, based on 2 measures, their attainment when they went in and what Jersey is good at and in my travels around England and local authorities and just to add to it, around the world, I have inspected in New York and I have inspected in China, what Jersey is very good at, it does use the C.A.T. (Cognitive Ability Testing) scores, which give you an objective view, this is an objective view of a child's performance. It gives a chances graph of where a child should go. Now they use those very well in Jersey. It is something that is not quite as common in the U.K. So Jersey has 3 measures and they use those measures very well indeed.

Deputy R.G. Le Hérisssier:

What are the 3?

Professional Adviser, Education, Sport and Culture:

You have got National Standards, which are your expectations and I think the Director referred to you have to be careful with National Standards because U.K. National Standards change very quickly. So 5 years ago when my children were at school it was the number of G.C.S.E.s you have got. So my sons for example in a U.K. school were encouraged not to take history or geography, because they wanted to have a very wide process. Suddenly it changed and it became 5 A to Cs. Suddenly it changed, last year, and became 5 A to Cs, including maths and English. It is now about to change again, it is in the *White Paper* that is going through, they are talking about an English baccalaureate which would consist of English, maths, a language and possibly a science and so on, and they are talking about this now being a new gold standard measure, such is the case that many schools in the U.K. are now pushing pupils through a 15-week course so that they can be ahead of the game, so that they can be judged in that way. An Ofsted view would be you go straight in and you would measure those 3 and you would come up with a judgment. So if you see a school that has got alleged low standards you have to check very carefully where those pupils were when they came in. If you see a school with very high standards you have to check where those students were when they went in, and whether they are working to their C.A.T. scores in the process. We know from the professional partner process that schools on Jersey do extremely well.

Deputy T.M. Pitman:

I do not want to distract us from Value Added because to me that is crucial to the argument about league tables, but I thought we missed a chance with Mr. Westwater. Could you enlarge on what you see the problems are statistically, as that is your area, with what Mr. Mills has done? Has he interpreted things correctly, for the record, because that is going to be important?

Head of Planning and Projects, Education, Sport and Culture:

The interpretation is for debate, clearly, but the main misinterpretation as far as I am concerned is simply the one that tries to align the 11 to 16 schools with schools in England. There can be no comparison. If we take away 41 per cent and I will refer here to C.A.T. scores, which is the testing that all students undergo in year 5, year 7 and year 9, it gives us a measure of the intuitive ability of the child. If we look at the mean C.A.T. scores of the schools they start at 118 and they gradually go down. The fee-paying sector all have scores of significantly higher than 100. The 11 to 16 schools beneath 100. The Jersey average is just over 100 which is exactly where you

would expect it to be. The G.C.S.E. results are around the same as the U.K., slightly above, which is where you would expect them to be, but the individual schools are vastly different.

[12:45]

You cannot take away 41 per cent and have a selective system and a selective major is that 2 schools are openly selective, that is fine, they take the high scoring pupils that they want and they are siphoned off. The 2 schools are selected on a slightly different basis but their C.A.T. scores are still significantly above average, then wait for 2 years and we say to Hautlieu: "You can take 15 per cent of what is left but the 15 per cent you select must all be significantly above average." If they are not significantly above then they are not offered a place. The pupils have no obligation to go, they may stay if they choose to and some do choose to stay, so you have a wide range of ability in your 11 to 16 schools but the mean score is significantly lower than the other schools. There are no authorities in the U.K., certainly none that I am aware of, that have a similar system and that have similar schools. There is not that range of ability for that profile.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

How long has the department been aware of that?

Head of Planning and Projects, Education, Sport and Culture:

It has always been the case. The 14 plus transfer has always, in my time, been here and it has always been the case. The 11 to 16 schools have always had this profile and the department works within that. We can compare the results nationally but what we cannot do is compare the results school against school.

Director, Education, Sport and Culture:

I think the important thing is when you take it right back up to system level and you forget about the distribution of students across the system, how does the system do compared to England and Wales? The system does well compared to England and Wales. Is that good enough? Well, we have been looking at some of the best systems in the world. England does not feature among them. Some of the best systems in the world, they have high expectations for all of their pupils. Regardless of the structures they put in place to support those pupils they have high expectations for them all. They place a high emphasis on recruiting the right people to teaching. Jersey has a challenge in this respect because we do not train our own teachers, we have a graduate training scheme but the majority of our teacher training is outside of our hands. The best systems in the world invest in ensuring that the quality of teaching is high and if you were to look at the investment in Jersey over I would say the last 10 years you would see a significant investment in

developing high quality teaching. The best systems in the world monitor and evaluate their performance and we do. The difficult bit is the best systems in the world have struck the right balance between school improvement and public accountability and it is interesting that the best systems in the world, in the best systems in the world, the accountability strategies of England and Wales do not necessarily feature.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

Just before we go too far from this, if the department has known for a while that there is such a variance in the outcomes of A to C grades, can I ask what extra provision has the department done in order to address this balance or has it done anything? Can the Minister explain?

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

I will start and then maybe my officers can fill in the gaps. Much emphasis has been placed on providing a curriculum that best suits the individual, because we talk about academic achievement but ultimately we come back to the requirements of the employer. What the employer wants to see is that curriculum translated and being applied to reflect the skills within the workplace, and so the schools have been focusing on alternative qualifications which would be classed as equivalent to G.C.S.E.s to develop those skills, in vocational training and in other areas. We believe to an extent we have been successful. Can there be more done? Absolutely. We currently have got a pilot scheme being operated at the moment with 100 of our 14 to 16 year-olds undertaking vocational courses. I have seen firsthand and spoken to those individuals. Without exception their school work has improved because of their involvement in the vocational training. The tutors who are responsible for them speak highly about their achievements and the businesses who are seeking to recruit these individuals are equally supportive of those actions. That is just one area. We also aim to focus specific support and provide additional support for those that need it, through the teachers' assistants that operate in some of our schools. As my director said, can we do more? Yes. Is there an issue of resources? Perhaps. Are we prioritising resources in the right areas? That could be challenged.

Director, Education, Sport and Culture:

I can give you some concrete examples of how we have moved. Inevitably you introduce some new programmes and literacy strategy was developed and implemented in 2009. Two new teaching and learning advisers for numeracy and literacy were appointed in 2010. Additional investment has been made in advisory support from outside the Island. The whole concept of professional partnering, and this is a 3-year project which we are now 18 months into, has been designed to support schools, to develop and to challenge schools with a view of raising standards. We have also developed criteria for what are outstanding schools to help schools aspire in each

of the areas to where they need to be. That does not mean that our schools are failing. Far from it, it means that our schools are committed to continuous improvement and we are committed to raising the bar as far as we can possibly raise it for all students. A lot has been done.

Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:

In a sense are you not contradicting yourself, Mr. Director? Because on the one hand you read out those criteria of what a world class school or school system looks like. On the other we have been told that you do peg your comparisons in a sense to the U.K. and that you are only just above the U.K. Surely if you are meeting all these criteria you would be incredibly good, even compared to the U.K.

Director, Education, Sport and Culture:

I would turn it the other way around and I would say surely if the structures that are being advocated from England for implementation in Jersey are that good then perhaps the U.K. English and Wales standards would be that much above Jersey standards, which they are not. So there is a journey here, and what the department has been trying to do is to take account of the unique circumstances, the unique context of Jersey and find a way to drive up standards without having to face the adverse consequences of some of the high stakes accountability measures that are in place in the U.K. We have seen this, you have seen this in Jersey, where a school in the past was headlined as a failing school and we know that the impact of that was that parents lost confidence, that pupils lost self-esteem, that the morale of teachers was to the point where they were moving off and we struggled to recruit new teachers to that school. So what we have recognised is that those accountability structures in a small Island can create schools in difficulty rather than pull them out of difficulty.

Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:

Okay, I think we might have different views on that. I will ask Deputy Pitman.

Deputy T.M. Pitman:

I know we are going to want to come on to the negatives in the U.K. of publicising league tables, but can I just enlarge on the point, you were talking about standards, but is it a fair observation as again another teacher has put to me, that really for schools like Granville, Haute Valleé, et cetera, the results of those young people who go on to Hautlieu, creamed off if you like, and their successes, do they really need to be considered within the basis of where those young people started, at Haute Valleé and Grainville, in looking at how good those schools are? Because they are almost losing some of their best students, so it is fine to look at their statistics but what I am saying is we should be able to find some way of assessment where Haute Valleé, Grainville et

cetera, La Rocquier, where the work that their teachers have done can be seen in those young people's success rather than saying that that is all down to Hautlieu. Because I do not think that public perception is that that is seen.

Director, Education, Sport and Culture:

It is not hard to do, in fact it was done a couple of weeks ago in the newspaper.

Deputy T.M. Pitman:

Well, I will be doing it.

Director, Education, Sport and Culture:

I am not sure that it is meaningful in that it is simply massaging the grades to place the students in the schools from whence they came. What you are saying I think is that the 11 to 16 schools need to be credited for the jobs that they do with students up until they transfer to Hautlieu.

Deputy T.M. Pitman:

Well, surely they do?

Director, Education, Sport and Culture:

I think the very fact that they transfer to Hautlieu is a celebration of that success and then of course Hautlieu needs to be credited for the job that it does with the students afterwards. The point here is that just because students have left the 11 to 16 schools does not mean that the schools suddenly become failing schools.

Deputy T.M. Pitman:

Absolutely.

Director, Education, Sport and Culture:

They do a very, very good job with the students that remain and that is ...

Deputy T.M. Pitman:

But are you getting that message out enough, is what I am getting at.

Director, Education, Sport and Culture:

I think we have tried to get that message out, yes. Whether that message wants to be heard or not is another thing.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

I just have some questions on the statistics, because it does cover this area. Now just to clarify, with the statistics we have been provided from your department regarding the 2010 G.C.S.E.s can you clarify that there is a difference between the way the students are presented in their results in these tables as opposed to the English league tables? By that I mean, as I understand it and have been informed by a representative in the Teachers' Union, in the G.C.S.E. league tables in England they exempt and remove certain categories of children. I wonder if you could just explain that, if you are aware of it, and do we do the same in what has been produced here?

Head of Planning and Projects, Education, Sport and Culture:

No, it does not. The results that I have given are exactly what I was asked for, the results of all students so I have included all students. In the U.K. students who arrive in a school, students for whom English is not their first language, and they arrive in a school within 2 years of examination are automatically removed from the league tables in England. Ours are included. Students who transfer school before I believe it is the beginning of March are not included in the destination school but are included in the school they have left. We do not do that or I do not do that. The results that we have show all students. If we were to amend the tables accordingly then the results would change but the changes would be so marginal as to be almost negligible.

Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:

Okay. I think we will have our quick break, as promised, and we will have 10 minutes.

[12:58]

[break]

[13:09]

Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:

Okay, folks, if I could ask the witnesses to, of course, be pedagogic experts of the first order, if they could speak clearly and loudly, not too loud by the way, you do not want to end up like me, if they could. Okay, are we ready? Good, so we will reconvene and I cut off Deputy Maçon in his prime.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

Yes, so I just asked about the exemption clauses and the response from the department as if you took them out they would be negligible in kind of what they show. In which case looking at the

difference between just the A to C grades, including maths and English, compared to the other schools ... again, specifically, Minister, on maths and English, and this has been known for a long time, do you, as a minister, see this as a priority? Do you think it is something which you need to concentrate more on?

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

I think that we should not be complacent and that every effort should be made in all areas of education to improve standards, including English and maths. It is not only an expectation of the department, but it is the expectation of all the schools and much effort is being placed into raising those standards. I think, as we have already heard, that certain individuals, for various reasons, will struggle to achieve an A to C pass but will, nevertheless, pass English and maths at a G.C.S.E. level.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

Then, Mr. Jones, sorry, on this matter, as a professional partner how do you challenge ... sorry, can you just tell us which schools you professionally partner?

Professional Adviser, Education, Sport and Culture

I have 14 of them, do you want me list them all?

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

No, I mean the ones in Jersey.

Professional Adviser, Education, Sport and Culture

In Jersey, I have 14. I oversee the whole of the scheme so I can talk about each of the schools.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

All right, okay, fair enough. In which case how have you challenged the free schools to up the A to C in maths and English?

Professional Adviser, Education, Sport and Culture

There is an issue here where people are making an assumption that every child can reach a particular level. One of the things you do as an Ofsted inspector, is you would check a whole range of indicators in England, for example, to check the ability range and the backgrounds of certain pupils. Then what you have to do is check whether the levels that the pupils have obtained in those schools are reasonable given that background. So if you go into a highly selective school that has been selected on ability you have far higher expectations. So if you get

a school, say below 80 per cent of 5 A to Cs in a highly selective school, that is not good enough. You are expecting it to be much higher. Equally if you go to a school that has got a whole range of problems then to try and get some of those pupils anywhere near those levels is very, very difficult. Now, the problem you have got in Jersey is compounded by the fact that these pupils are separated out, if I put it another way for you. If the system in Jersey was such that each school was balanced then you would probably find that the number of A to Cs, including maths and English, would be well above, or certainly above the UK level but because the particular groups of pupils are focused in one or 2 schools, that means it is a very difficult thing to make a judgment. You have to be very careful about whether you are going to apply that measure at all. If I just put a slight sideways to this. This is a very complicated process. One of my roles in my previous life was I was at Exeter University for 10 years, I ran the educational research methodology course at a masters level and it was the course that people went through for PhD. The bit that we are always trying to tell people who are involved in any form of statistical data is you must compare like with like. It is very, very difficult to try and compare one school that is totally different to another school so you have to use other indicators as well. So the professional partner scheme will look at those A to Cs, they will then look at the value added, they will then look at the leadership and management processes, they will then look at the monitoring procedures, the quality of teaching, we will look at how each child is tracked, what the interventions are and then you will come up with a judgment about the quality of that school.

[13:15]

Now, for example there are several, certainly 2 of those schools that are getting highlighted have some of the best tracking procedures that I have ever seen in the hundreds of schools that I have been into. They have some of the most rigorous and systematic approaches for driving up standards. At one school, in particular, the head teacher lectures in the U.K. regularly to 200 head teachers on how to use data to drive up standards. So using all of those particular processes you go through, we can say that those schools are doing an incredible job. But the difficulty is given the context of those schools you are not ever going to get all of those children to pass A to C, including maths and English.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

A critic might argue that that particular attitude, whether it is right or wrong, I am not passing a judgment, would argue that that attitude leads to complacency and therefore leads to a self-fulfilling prophecy, would you care to comment?

Professional Adviser, Education, Sport and Culture

Well, that is the entitlement argument and it is a good argument and it is one that I fully agree with that the last thing you do is simply say: "We, therefore, have pupils from a poor background and therefore we have a low process." Now, the C.A.T. score is a very good indicator for that because what the C.A.T score, as opposed to say the U.K. model, the U.K. model use a socioeconomic database, basically it uses free school meals. It basically says if you have got a high number of free school meals your school is expected to have a lower expectation that comes out. That is a pretty broad and, I think, quite a dangerous process but that is how the whole of the system based in the U.K. In Jersey they are using a C.A.T score so you may have somebody who comes from a particular background who is scoring very well. They use those C.A.T. scores for a chances graph to push them up. So, going back to some of the schools that you have mentioned, heads of departments in each of those departments, will be held to account about the progress of the pupils against those schools. That is a way of ensuring that each child reaches its potential, irrespective of its background. That is different from the U.K. model and I think is a lot stronger and certainly far more effect. To then turn around and simply pluck a couple of statistics out randomly and say: "Oh, that means that this school is failing", is not the way that you can go forward. It is a very disingenuous argument. I think it is probably an irresponsible argument because what you should be doing is comparing like with like and the range of processes. So the professional partners programme, backed up by external inspections, has verified that those schools, by using a range of indicators, are doing a very good job.

Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:

So you are satisfied with this low rate in terms of schools of A to C in English and maths, are you?

Professional Adviser, Education, Sport and Culture

I think you have got to be careful when you say "low" because some of those results are very high in comparison to where they ought to be. If you take what a C.A.T. score chances graph says these people should achieve, these schools, in many cases, are way beyond where they ought to be. It is simply because they are grouped together, that is the problem. They are all in ...

Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:

But do you think in terms of social issues, and then I will move to Deputy Pitman - and this was argued yesterday as you obviously remember - do you think it is something that we should really tolerate, irrespective of the philosophical arguments; does it make them able to function in the workplace? Do you think it is right that this number of students is leaving, apparently - if we take G.S.C.E. English and maths as an indicator - unable to use these skills in the workplace?

Professional Adviser, Education, Sport and Culture

They are not ... Over the Island? The way I looked at the issues that came up when it was presented that these schools are failing ... if you look at it as a system as a whole, we know that the pupils in the fee paying schools do extremely well. They do very well indeed. If you compare them to similar schools in the U.K. they did very well. We know that Hautlieu, as a grammar school, does extremely well if you compare it to grammar schools in the U.K. We know that the pupils who transfer out of the 14 to 16 schools and go to Hautlieu do very well. We know that the overwhelming majority of the pupils who stay in those schools who could have transferred out but chose not to because their parents had the choice, do very well. We know that the pupils who are not capable of gaining an academic career are given a very, very good curriculum that suits them, that keeps them in schools, that stops them being suspended, it stops them causing trouble because they have got the right kind of curriculum. Now, the fact that all of that takes place in very different organisations means that if you want to compare one school to another it is a bit of a strange comparison because you cannot do that in the U.K. You would not get half of the pupils taken out and then deal with that other process.

Deputy R.G. Le Hérisssier:

Do you think we should abandon the system? Do you think it is totally unfit for purpose?

Professional Adviser, Education, Sport and Culture

I think that the current system is made to work very well by the people in the system. I mean the teachers in the system make that system work very well. What you do with the system is not for me. I mean, I am new to Jersey, I do not understand a great deal of things in Jersey, but I know you have a very, very different legal system. Now, that legal system has been developed over many, many years.

Deputy R.G. Le Hérisssier:

But as a professional educationalist do you think it is really such an unbelievable mishmash that it should be abandoned in favour of a more rational system?

Professional Adviser, Education, Sport and Culture

I think it is the way you report that is the problem.

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

I think that you are asking my officers to make political comment.

Deputy R.G. Le Hérisier:

Well, what do you think, Mr. Minister?

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

I do not believe that the system is failing young people. I think it presents ...

Deputy R.G. Le Hérisier:

I did not say that, I said is it such a mess that it needs to be radically reformed?

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

I think by inference you are suggesting that it is failing the students in our care and I do not believe that to be the case. There is a discussion to be had with the public and stakeholders about whether or not the current system should be maintained as it is or changes made. Indications are, and if we look back through history, and reasonably recent history, early 1990s I believe, where I think you were probably part of that debate, much discussion went on with regard to a sixth form college. It was a clear view expressed by Islanders, parents, students alike, that that was not the appropriate way forward. As I said before I have, at the moment, no indication that any major changes should take place. What I am saying is that we acknowledge that because of the system some of our schools need to adapt to ensure that we provide the right learning opportunities for the individuals in their care. I think that is where the focus should be as we move forward. Just one final point though, I would say that neither myself nor the department and perhaps, more essentially, be it schools and the teachers within the schools, accept that standards cannot be improved. There is a genuine desire which is part of the teaching profession to maximise the potential of every individual and we will strive to do that. We are not suggesting we are there yet. We are not suggesting that improvements cannot be made. But we want people to acknowledge the efforts that we are making as much as the need to improve.

Deputy R.G. Le Hérisier:

So, you think, Mr. Minister, this system as it stands can be improved and you can ratchet up performance within the system as it is structured?

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

Absolutely, and the debate needs to be had.

Deputy R.G. Le Hérisier:

Okay, I will move to ...

Deputy T.M. Pitman:

I should probably ask the Minister, because I would not ask his officer to make a political statement, but are we relying on teachers to make good and make work what we, as politicians, then will not get to grips with?

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

No, I do not think so. I think that the Island, as I said, has chosen a particularly unique system of education which the Island has believed suits the education required for the young people and to provide for the needs of our businesses and our local economy. The teachers are required to operate within that system. They are operating and working very well. They are delivering the results. Just one example that has stuck in my mind, I think it was the last year or the year before last, I was fortunate enough to attend an award ceremony at Grainville. There was a young girl that I presented an award to. She was a Polish girl that arrived on the Island at 13 and had been provided a place at Grainville. When she arrived her English was extremely limited. In 3 years at Grainville School, who some people are classing as a failing school, she gained 13 A stars, 13. So for anyone to suggest that our teachers are not able to provide the education that maximises the ability of individuals, I would say: "Where is your proof?"

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

But, Minister, there will always be exceptions, people who will buck the trend. Surely education policies should be rolled across the general distribution of student?

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

Absolutely, and that is what we do. That is what the curriculum is designed for. That is why we are developing vocational training. That is why we are developing and using other opportunities to present and provide the very best for our young people.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

On this question of performance, we heard in evidence yesterday that when a school in England does not reach the 35 per cent of A to C in English and maths this then triggers different systems which will allow more resource or more intervention within a school to start occurring. Can I ask what the department's expectation is for a school's performance? In other words what is the department's floor? What does it believe that the schools should, at minimum, be achieving?

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

Well, first of all - and I will require the expert to fill in the gaps on this - we monitor our schools, as we have already said, very closely, all schools. So we would not anticipate getting to a point, or

arriving at a point, where we have a school in serious difficulties. We have measurements in place that will address issues identified through the performance monitoring system. Perhaps either my director or Graham might choose to elaborate on that matter.

Deputy R.G. Le Hérisier:

I think in a way ... sorry can I interrupt because I know that is an excellent question? I know Deputy Pitman wishes to build on it by asking about the league tables just so that we can get that argument fully out into the open and you ... sorry do you want to ...

Deputy T.M. Pitman:

Obviously, we are touching on it regularly but whether we like it or not for a lot of people and especially some parents this will come down to just straight argument. Are league tables a benefit or are they not? Could you clarify your views in contrast with Mr. Mills on that? What evidence have you got that it will be wholly negative if we do go down that route? Are there advantages? We talked about value added but maybe you could enlarge on that.

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

The first thing that I would like to say is that league tables are created by the media and not by government. It is not our intention to create any league tables especially on a small island like ourselves where we have, as I said before, a unique education system that we are unable to compare like with like. Also, there are other concerns that are linked to producing league tables as we have seen in the *J.E.P. (Jersey Evening Post)* in recent weeks. That is that people and organisations start to behave according to the way in which they are measured. That leads on to the curriculum ending up being designed to deliver on measurements and not necessarily focusing on the pupil's needs. It can end up with a loss of a broad and balanced curriculum. There is evidence that league tables can encourage cheating by teachers to deliver targets. There is an adverse impact on whole school communities. I think we have already seen signs of that in relation to the information that is being put in the public domain by certain individuals. There is also and, perhaps, more worryingly, an adverse impact on those pupils with lower ability and special educational needs.

[13:30]

I think that league tables are extremely divisive especially if they are used, as I said, to promote a particular agenda. I think that all the evidence and research shows that what I have just said is, in fact, the views held by many individuals, both on the Island and in the U.K. itself.

Deputy T.M. Pitman:

Do you want to add to that, Mr. Director?

Director, Education, Sport and Culture:

I mean our views of league tables, as educationalists, are based on the research that is available; it is as simple as that. The introduction of league tables ... what would be the value in Jersey, for a start, because you are likely to have the same schools at the top and the same schools at the bottom with few changes years on. But, we know that the additional pressure put on schools can lead to teaching to the test. We saw that with S.A.T.s (Scholastic Aptitude Test) for ourselves, a narrowing of the curriculum, focusing on softer subjects because in softer subjects you possibly could achieve higher grades. We have seen, in the U.K., not in Jersey, an impact on school admissions where head teachers have been pushed into a position, because of the status of their school, because it is important to maintain the status of the school, of taking those youngsters who are going to perform better in examinations, who are going to show up well in the measurements. We know that it has led to students being taken out of, or having time reduced in subjects such as music, P.E. (physical education), et cetera. These are students who are, perhaps, D candidates, on the borderline of getting a C, and the investment in those students is upped in order to narrow their curriculum and get them the grades that they need to show the school off in a good light. Furthermore, I think the big one, and the Minister has touched on it as far as special needs are concerned, it is not just special needs, it is also challenging students. There is less of an incentive for schools to work with students who are difficult. One of the things that I think Jersey needs to pride itself on is the low number, if at all, in the last few years of permanent exclusions because sometimes, very occasionally, and this is not an excuse for low standards, but sometimes it needs to be recognised that where a child is in very, very difficult circumstances outside of school, the school is doing a very good job to provide a broad and balanced curriculum for them and keep them in school until the end of their school career. So, the research evidence is there, league table have had an effect on the behaviours of schools and head teachers and teachers.

Deputy T.M. Pitman:

I am glad you have touched on the exclusions because that was my experience working in Leicester, there was an impact but we do not have permanent exclusions, in theory, in Jersey really, do we?

Director, Education, Sport and Culture:

We have them in theory; we do not have them in practise.

Deputy T.M. Pitman:

I knew I was nearly right.

Director, Education, Sport and Culture:

The facility for a head teacher to permanently exclude exists in law, however the support services that are provided to schools and the way that schools, themselves, have worked with students has meant that where a student needs an alternative placement that is usually managed through a process that is perhaps a lot more respectful of the pupil's circumstances than an exclusion process where they simply get put out of school.

Deputy T.M. Pitman:

Could I just ask, and I know my colleagues want to come in, but in a small jurisdiction like Jersey could that danger not be managed, it need not follow the white pen down the U.K. ...

Director, Education, Sport and Culture:

The exclusion or the effect of the league tables?

Deputy T.M. Pitman:

The effect of the league tables, both of them really.

Director, Education, Sport and Culture:

We have not managed it too well over the last few weeks I would have to say. The fact of the matter is that league tables create perceptions. Perceptions can be dispelled as long as you can get enough information out there for people to make informed decisions but at the same time people will sometimes ignore the information because it does not suit whatever the purposes are.

Deputy T.M. Pitman:

The issue of exclusion, specifically, surely, that could be managed in a small community like Jersey? Surely it would be easy to control it that that would not happen so people are being omitted because they are difficult pupils; they are going to bring the standard down.

Director, Education, Sport and Culture:

You could do it. It would require you to put in processes, procedures, systems to stop it happening, but they are not required at the moment because schools are working constructively with the students and the support services that are around the schools mean that when a student has to leave that it is managed appropriately.

Deputy T.M. Pitman:

Looking to go on to value added but go on.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

Just before that, I mean the Minister made a very strong case and made his opinions about league tables known, however this information has come out under the Freedom of Information Code and will be available under the Freedom of Information (Jersey) Law 201- which the States is due to debate, in which case this information will come out through the public domain now that, most likely, the media are aware that they can access it. In which case, how will the department manage this situation because although the department may not want this information to come out it will be publicly available? In evidence yesterday it was argued that if the information is going to come out it might as well be alongside proper analysis, proper contextualisation. Does the department see any merit in that?

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

We recognise that certain people, will want to monitor the performance of our schools. It is a serious challenge for us because we, too, want to celebrate the success and the performance of each of the schools that we are responsible for across the Island. We do not believe, as I say, in producing league tables because the education system is skewed and as we cannot compare like for like, this is not the appropriate way forward. We are working on how we might be able to produce some meaningful data that properly shows the progress made by our schools but there is no, what I would call, off the peg model. I would also like to point out that the individual was provided with 300 pages, which I believe you now have, of raw data which covered the results of all of the Island's schools. We are looking at reviewing our policy about how that information is presented. However, we do know that the information is provided at each school and to the parents of those schools. The question is how can we have a more consistent policy across the schools and websites and so on and so forth to enable a greater degree of an informed choice. The question that I suppose I am left with, and I have not got an answer to it, is who is demanding that we publish or produce some form of league table? Who is it? At the moment we have heard one individual that is suggesting that that is what is required. I also am aware that certain other individuals support that view. But at the moment it is not clear to me as to whether, (1) it is a desire of government, or, indeed, the public that we move towards looking at producing a league table based on a narrow performance measurement that we know is unhelpful within the U.K. system.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

Although, Minister, I do believe some time ago Senator Ben Shenton was asking for very similar information. Do you not think that through their elected representative the people of the Island have been asking for this information?

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

When Senator Shenton asked for the information a full explanation was given and I would say that at the moment it still is my policy not to produce league tables. If Senator Shenton's question - and I think I did offer him access to any information he required - was specific about particular schools, I have no problem in that. We need to, as we have said before, we need to monitor each school's performance. We need to give confidence to both the parents, students and the wider public that our schools are doing the best they can for the pupils in their care.

Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:

But do you not think, Mr. Minister, you could give them this confidence if you were prepared to show what the situation was with inspection reports or partnership reports as perhaps they are called, the broader picture, the contextual picture re exam results, if you were to put those issues out there into the public domain, do you not think people would have more faith in what you are doing? Whereas they now get the impression that you are trying to control their view of how education performs.

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

Who is suggesting that ...

Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:

The public believe that because while they do not necessarily agree, I do not know, with what Mr. Mills said perhaps around league tables, re Deputy Pitman's comments. There has arisen this major issue of transparency and it was alluded to by the director when he talked about public accountability. I got the feeling he was saying that we have got to manage public accountability. How do we manage it?

Director, Education, Sport and Culture:

I mean you have touched on the point; Jersey has not had this debate. I think it is important that, politically, you have this debate before you reach a conclusion and that your debate is informed by experiences of other systems. Finland, for example, is what is generally recognised as one of the best education systems in the world, has a low emphasis on accountability and a high emphasis on school improvement. There are other systems that have gone to the other extreme.

You need to know, politically, what the implications of different strategies are and make a decision about what you are prepared to tolerate. There has been no intentional secrecy in all of this because, the schools, themselves, have been required to publish the results to their own parents. Why are inspection reports not published? Well, I could tell you that one of our schools, in fact 2 of our schools, have had something like 12 inspections in the last couple of years, focused inspections. The reason that they have engaged in that process and come along with it is because they have known that the reports are internal to them and they are going to help them develop. Now, if you have an external inspection you can expect those schools to say: "Thank you very much, I will see you every 5 years." You have got to take a view as to which system is going to provide the right balance of school improvement and accountability for the public. We are not quite there yet.

Deputy R.G. Le Hérisier:

Would you like to see the system more open, Mr. Director? How would you advise us?

Director, Education, Sport and Culture:

It is not for me to say what you would like politically but from an educational perspective I would say that what you need to do is to determine what it is that you most value about your system, find ways to measure what you most value about your system and then develop ways to inform the public about that and show them how well you are doing. We are in the middle of a 3 year project to develop, I suppose, more robust accountability measures because the Island was caught out when H.M.I. (Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools) disappeared and Ofsted came in. The Island was caught out again when S.A.T.s disappeared because the reliance then had to be on teacher assessment and we need time to develop the skills of teacher assessment, time to develop the moderation of processes, et cetera. We are doing all that now. We have not taken a view about whether or not they are robust enough to put into the public domain but that is the end goal. This is 18 months into a 3 year project and what we are trying to do is to develop systems that people will understand and, ultimately, lead to an annual report card for the service and an annual report card for individual schools.

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

I would like to just pick up the point that you made earlier, and a number of other individuals have made, that we are somehow being accused of being secretive or opaque. That is far from the truth as I am sure the members of your panel will well know. We have endeavoured to operate an open door policy within our department where anyone is able to come and discuss any matter of concern and we will provide any information they require as long as it does not impact on a third party and meets the various rules and regulations. I would just like to add, and I pick up the point

about the media and in particular the *J.E.P.*, they contacted us and spoke to us about league tables. They were invited to come and talk to us, especially with my officers, so that we could explain the background and the reasons behind some of the figures. That happened.

[13:45]

The sadness is they have chosen not to report that, not to focus on, perhaps, some of the reasoning behind the policy but chose to sensationalise this particular matter. Now, I accept they are required to meet public expectation but, equally, I would hope that in the weeks and months to come, as we move forward and into the major consultation which will revolve around the Green Paper that we can have an open, honest and more importantly, fair debate on matters such as these.

Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:

But would you not say at the end of the day you feel like that because they have been quite critical? Is that not the reason?

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

Not at all. I think that criticism is good if it is constructive. I do not believe at the moment that what is being spoken about is constructive and helpful.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

Then that leads to the question, Minister, how will you make it constructive? How will you make it helpful to the public?

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

I will endeavour to do all I can by informing the public and supporting reviews such as this. I must admit I would like to say I am grateful to your panel, Deputy Le Hérissier, for undertaking this particular review because it does give us an opportunity to put on record what we are doing and provide some unadulterated information and facts behind some of the figures that have been spoken about in recent weeks and that is extremely useful. We will continue to explain and discuss constructively with parents and the public alike about our services and how we provide them. We will take on board any issues that are raised. We are not deaf to the concerns that people raise but what we are concerned about is the detrimental impact of trying to compare apples with oranges does for our school and education system and individual schools in particular.

Deputy R.G. Le Hérisier:

One of the main comments made and I was going to come on to this when Mr. Mills was taxed about: "Well, how would you move forward?", he put forward various management kind of approaches like we needed to look at leadership and culture in the schools, for example, and we may come back to that. But one of the issues that did arise, Mr. Minister; obviously there were criticisms of your department yesterday. Do you feel, and give us examples ... how do you challenge the department and say: "I am not happy with this. I am not happy with that. We have really got to change our approach on this." Can you just us some examples where that has happened recently?

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

I suppose I would start by saying that on a fortnightly basis we have a ministerial team meeting that includes all the senior management team of my department, including my chief officer, plus my 2 Assistant Ministers and we discuss a range of issues that have come to our attention or areas of work that the department is conducting. Equally, I am involved and participate in many different meetings.

Deputy R.G. Le Hérisier:

So what issues do you raise that those meetings where you are not happy? Just for the sake of argument, you are not happy with the way things are going, what sort of issues are raised?

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

I would just like to finish, if I may, by saying that apart from those meetings, I meet with different organisations where we look at the curriculum. I meet with head teachers, I meet with governors and this is all designed to inform me about any issues, especially educational issues that are coming to the fore. One of the main thrusts of our work and one of the main areas that I believe we have not been very successful in, up to now, is developing and providing the correct learning opportunities for those that are less academic within our school system. Much effort has been placed on that particular area over the last 18 months. The signs are good, discussion still needs to be had and it will be included in the Green Paper, but these are the areas that we need to develop further and I believe that improvements can be made in. At the same time when we look at performance and it is only right ... we have spoken about, perhaps, some of the more successful schools in the particular narrow performance measurement of 5 A* to C. What we do at the department, and through the monitoring of performance, we look at what that information does not provide us, because it does not tell us whether or not those schools that are achieving a 99 per cent success on that narrow measure, whether those students are performing to their

maximum ability and how high above that benchmark are they achieving. That is as important as focusing on the less academic and providing for their needs.

Deputy R.G. Le Hérisier:

So you have pressed this point within the department?

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

It is one of the many subjects that we discuss. We want to provide an all-rounded education. We recognise the States have tasked my department and me, in particular, with delivering an education that we can all be proud of. Annual Business Plans are produced which the States require us to deliver and chose to amend, on occasion. We are committed to doing that.

Deputy R.G. Le Hérisier:

I will pass you to Deputy Pitman.

Deputy T.M. Pitman:

While you are on that subject, Minister, I think it would be useful for the panel and the public to know in improving things in this particular area, how much power have you and your director got? Let us say in schools like Beaulieu, for instance, how much power have you got on those schools?

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

Well, Beaulieu is an interesting one because you cite one of the 3 Catholic schools that are independent. However, we have a responsibility within the education law to oversee all the education provided on the Island and we take that matter very seriously. We are very grateful to the governors of all the fee paying schools, including Beaulieu, who we have a very constructive and good relationship with. I have the ability, as a minister, to have representatives, my representatives, on that board of governors so we can have, if you like, an inside view of what is happening within those independent schools. It is an important element. It is recognised as a benefit to both ourselves and, indeed, the independent schools. It alerts us, perhaps, to some of the challenges that those independent schools face as much as some of the challenges that we know exist within our own States education system.

Director, Education, Sport and Culture:

Deputy, can I just clarify? I am not a governor of Beaulieu School. There is an invitation to me to attend governing body meetings as the Minister's representative, as an adviser if I am required

and to look after the Minister's interests if he requires me to do so. I am not a voting governor on either Beaulieu or De La Salle.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

If I can move on to a slightly different area. Mr. Westwater, in the media reference was made to the disparity between the grades between boys and girls within the G.C.S.E. and obviously this data has been available for a while, can you comment on what advice recommendations you have made to the Minister in order to address this issue?

Head of Planning and Projects, Education, Sport and Culture:

May I take a step back first, please, and say that yes we do look at the gender differences and there are gender differences in subjects in every authority in the U.K., not just Jersey. Every single authority has this. The gender differences in Jersey are generally around the same as the U.K. In A level results this year we have 9 subjects where we had a narrower margin than the U.K. and the remainder were slightly bigger. So 9 smaller and I think it was 13 or 14 were larger, so very much the same. G.C.S.E. coincidentally exactly 9 that were a narrower margin than the U.K. and again probably 14 or 15 were slightly larger but a fair number of G.C.S.E. subjects are clustered, for instance Art and Design subjects are clustered into one category so it is impossible to subdivide them. To summarise, the gender differences that appear in the Jersey results are not vastly different to gender differences in the U.K.; some subjects are better, some are worse. But there is no huge issue there, it is very much as we would expect it.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

Although some would contend that while the differences perhaps might be natural, given the population, some may contend the lag and the difference still would mean that there should be greater emphasis that the department should be putting for the gender difference. Maybe the Minister would like to comment on what he has done?

Director, Education, Sport and Culture:

You are absolutely correct. I suppose the starting point is that we do not particularly want a gender difference at all. We want all young people to perform as best they can. I think there are different views about why there are gender differences and particularly different views if you ask boys and girls separately. This is an issue not just for this jurisdiction, I think is what Mr. Westwater is saying, but it is not an issue we are complacent with. We know that schools employ strategies to raise attainment. There are a whole range of strategies that can be employed from simply checking boys separately girls, even within a co-educational school having single sex classes in some subjects - and some schools have worked with that - to changing the teaching

practice to try and motivate and inspire boys in perhaps a different way. Some schools have even looked at examination syllabuses. The traditional thing of the past was to enter boys scores in examination boards where it assessment was mostly through exams and girls then where the assessment was through course work, because it met the particular needs differently. I think the point that we would like to get across is that this is not a surprise to us, there is no complacency about this, schools are working to address issues, they will work differently according to the context of their own school. Professional partners when they talk to schools, and inspectors indeed when they come in, will highlight gender differences and ask schools what they are doing to try and narrow the gap. So there is no complacency there.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

In what way have schools been challenged to employ different approaches from the department?

Director, Education, Sport and Culture:

I have just explained that. The fact is that professional partners are not necessarily advisers to schools in the way that you would think about a subject adviser going in and explaining how to teach a subject. They are there to challenge the school. They will ask the school, for example, you appear to have a difference here between boys and girls, what is it that you are doing about it? Is there support that you need? At that point we might bring in external advice, we use Serco for both advisory support and inspection services, to assist that school in developing strategies to work with boys and girls. Whatever strategy is at play will depend on the context of the school and whatever is already happening in that school in relation to strategies.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

In that case, can the schools come back to the department to ask for extra resource? Have those type of applications been made?

Director, Education, Sport and Culture:

We would expect schools first off to look to their own resources because this is a fundamental challenge within a school and this is part of what you get your budget for, is it not? So we would expect schools to be looking at their support services, their management structure, their structures for providing additional resources themselves to children, not in terms of gender differences but children with special needs, et cetera. So there is a fair degree of autonomy as far as the school is concerned and the governing bodies are concerned in the use of resources but it is within the capacity of the professional partner to say: "Why are you not deploying your resources to achieve this?" That is the characteristic, I think, of the relationship between the

school and the professional partner. It is not a cosy conversation, it is supportive but it is challenging.

[14:00]

Deputy R.G. Le Hérisier:

We are almost at the end, as I said, not the end of everything but just the end of this session, so I will ask my colleagues to think of their wrap up questions and I have got a couple. One for the Minister, it was put to us by Mr. Mills that although you are all very hardworking, is the department far too large? You manage everything from sports fields to Fort Regent, of course, to the schools. Is the department too large?

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

No. If your panel want verification of that and how we are managing our department, we have just gone through a C.S.R. (Comprehensive Spending Review) process and external consultants were brought in, a company called Tribal, who wrote quite a comprehensive report on the department which has been published for some while. Not only does it show where we spend our money, how we spend it and what for, but also it identifies the fact that our department has been extremely proactive in looking and concentrating on the issues that face education both now and in future, and we are doing something about it. I hope that individuals who choose to call for data from the department look at much of the published data that already exists which identifies both the good things and the bad things about our department.

Deputy R.G. Le Hérisier:

Yes, okay, thank you. One last question to Graham. Again, Mr. Mills, when he was pressed about what should we do for the future, he put a great emphasis upon the leadership and culture of a school. From your experience, Graham, if somebody says things need to improve, not that it is failing but things need to improve, what are the factors from your research which move a school forward in that situation?

Professional Adviser, Education, Sport and Culture:

It is all in this document here and it is very, very detailed, but if you just take one section of the professional partner's role, which is to interrogate and analyse the leadership of the school, there are factors based on the literature, based on Ofsted criteria, which say exactly what a good school should achieve. We have got a range of those factors clearly identified, a criteria which the schools all have which show what you would expect from an outstanding school in terms of the systems that you would have in place, the level of monitoring the rigour of monitoring and so on.

The schools have to judge themselves against that, then I will go into a school, the professional partners will go into a school, and analyse if that is happening. If it is not there is an action plan, it goes in the school development plan, that information is put in, governors would see that. It is interesting to note, certainly in the U.K. governors are very much part of that leadership role. If you grade a school in the U.K. about leadership you grade the Chair of Governors as well. So the whole aspect of how to improve a school through leadership is taken care of in that process.

Deputy R.G. Le Hérisssier:

So just from your experience, what moves a school forward if there are serious issues with the school? I know I am asking you to generalise, which is perhaps a bit naughty, but from your experience?

Professional Adviser, Education, Sport and Culture:

Basically the simple answer is clearly the quality of leadership but it is not, I think I heard a word yesterday, inspirational leadership. There is a whole range of kind of leadership programmes, some people call it distributed leadership, some people call it transformational leadership, but what it is basically saying is the best way to move a school forward is to have leadership that is routed throughout the school. It is routed throughout the school through a series of systems. So, for example, if you go into school and you talk to any teacher they will tell you about the leadership systems. If they do not, if it is only in the Head's head it is not routed in the school. That would include, in the 4 sections that we have got, an analysis of data, good analysis of data, tracking procedures, it would include a very good understanding of the quality of teaching, so you have to have good quality of teaching, you have to have clear leadership processes, development plans, monitoring procedures to hold things to account and you have also got to have good ways of finding out what is going on. So your relationships with the community, your questionnaires to parents, your meeting with parents, your interviews with pupils, your analysis of the work that goes through, so across those 4 areas we have got very clear indicators. I have to say there is a little bit of a tone in the meeting that is quite negative. My view of this Island's schools on a school by school process is that you can go into these schools and see some extremely highly performing schools. Some have very, very good systems in place. The danger you have ... what we have got is this, I would say, random choice of one indicator and allowing yourself to be pulled down on that one indicator that therefore judges the whole of your schools can skew your whole system and make it negative. That is one of the biggest problems. If you look at the range processes you have got, you look at the range of indicators you can see that Jersey schools are extremely well organised and delivering some incredible things.

Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:

Okay, thank you for that. I will ask my 2 colleagues for their wrap up questions.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

Yes, earlier I asked a question about what the Minister perceives as the minimum standard that he would expect from the free schools. I wonder if he is able to comment.

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

I do not think it is a case of requiring a minimum standard, it is an expectation that schools attain and seek to attain the highest standard possible for both the school itself and more importantly enable the students' achievements to be at that high standard. I would not be satisfied with minimum standards. We are all working to improve the standards of education and the achievements of our young people and that has got to be a continuing aim.

Deputy T.M. Pitman:

I probably would have asked much of Roy has asked, however I would say as we have seen with the fee-paying schools, there is an election looming and probably Senators at least who have not done very much and are probably getting a bit worried about their seats now, how do you ensure that we retain what is important here and make this a positive by focusing on young people's needs? How do you do that?

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

I think the public will do that for me because I have great faith in the public. I have got great faith in parents and the genuine desire to want to provide the best for their children. I think that everybody is wanting to have that confidence in our schools, we want to provide it to them, we also want to encourage them to converse with us which is consistent with the aims and objectives behind our Green Paper, and I accept that we seem to be speaking about it for far too long and but soon it will be delivered.

Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:

When was the date of delivery?

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

It is sometime in April. I was hoping it was ...

Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:

That is a big month now.

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

I must apologise, these sort of issues have distracted us from some of our primary aims. Also this ... and I am not seeking to be excused because of the fact that it is delayed but the C.S.R. process has taken up far more time than we anticipated, as a department, and we want to get it right. I made a commitment to all the stakeholders that I would involve them in the discussions. Some discussions have taken place around a draft of the Green Paper. I also made a commitment to share it with yourselves, which I still intend to do, and then once we believe that it is in the right form and shape that will enable everybody to express a view, then obviously we will release it.

Deputy T.M. Pitman:

But just to take on from the point Deputy Le Hérissier made earlier, part of that confidence from the public is going to be about transparency and accountability so how do you counter the negativity perhaps that has come out of this, because I think there can be some positives, as I say, but how do you ensure that that message is put out there, that you are open and you are accountable?

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

It is a challenge. I suppose the one thing that I am relying upon is that there are many, many individuals within our community that have great confidence in the education that we provide. Many parents have already written to me and I know contacted the media expressing their views of particular schools and how their children have been provided for. I do appreciate that there are some parents who feel that we have let them down, or a particular school has let them down. I feel sorry for that. It is not our intention and, as I said before, our aim is to maximise the potential of every individual, and help them succeed. So I am not saying that we cannot improve, all I am saying is that I hope that people will recognise that we know what we are doing, we have got good staff, whether it is at department level or within the schools, who are experienced in their field, and committed to providing the very best for our young people.

Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:

Okay, thank you.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

Very last one. Yes, I will just make the point very quickly that scrutiny, as you know, Minister, is evidenced based, there was some comment on the tone, many of the panel members have had to pitch questions which personally they do not agree with but, of course being good scrutiny we

have had to do that, so the panel does not express any issues at this moment in time. My last question is, there has been a comment in the public that now that these results have been put in the public eye there is a perception that the department for years made the comparison with the U.K. standards and the U.K. achievements saying that Jersey comparatively is doing very well and yet when some of these figures have been resolved, looking closely at some of the schools, there is a public perception that in some way they have been misled and this is for this and now we see a change from the Education Department where indeed the Ministers say we are not comparing apples with oranges. Can the Minister please comment on this change of view perhaps?

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

Let me do it this way. Can improvements be made in all of our Island schools? Yes. Should information be provided to help parents make informed choices on their child's education? Yes. Should taxpayers have confidence that my department is using all available resources to deliver education in the most effective and efficient way? Yes. Is focusing on one narrow performance measurement to judge a school's performance right? Absolutely not. I make no apologies whatsoever of standing by the current education policy of not producing league tables that do not compare like with like.

Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:

Thank you, Jeremy, thank you, Trevor. In a way we have had the final comment from the Minister but we will offer him another chance. Are there any things you think we may have avoided, we may have got the wrong end of the stick or just things you feel you wanted to say but, as they say in the interview, you never really had a chance to say it? Anything of that nature? No. Jim.

Head of Planning and Projects, Education, Sport and Culture:

There was a comment made yesterday that pupils who do not achieve an A* to C in maths and English are perhaps failing. If any examination board produced an exam where all of the students passed the test A* to C, that exam board would be out of business within 24 hours. Examinations are there to differentiate between those at the top end, the middle and the lower end, and that is exactly what they do. Exam results are non-referenced. That means simply that when the exams are marked and the grades distributed, a certain proportion is allocated as a D, E, F, G. Normally in maths and English it is somewhere between 65-70% A* to C, 30-35% of the rest. To expect all students in Jersey to be in that top 70-75% cohort is unrealistic, it cannot be done. It is like saying to driving standards, next year we want everyone to pass the driving test; it cannot happen. There are some people who cannot pass the driving test on their first attempt, and there are some

students who are not capable of achieving an A* to C, in maths and English, certainly not first time around.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

One point, on the way that G.C.S.E.s are worked out, can you confirm that say one gets a certain mark one year that might end them with a C grade yet in another year that exact same mark might end them with a D grade?

Head of Planning and Projects, Education, Sport and Culture:

That is correct, yes.

[14:15]

If you are on the grade boundary then that certainly is the case, yes.

Deputy R.G. Le Hérisier:

Thank you, Jim, for that. Any final comments? No, sorry we have already ... back to you.

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

Back to me. Yes, I suppose the final comment is we are and have been preparing to have an open, honest and fair debate on the future of education that is required both by the public and the Island as a whole. We are looking forward to that open and honest debate. I would also, again, like to thank the panel for looking at and picking up this particular topic, and if we can offer any further assistance or provide any further information, please do not hesitate to contact the department because we will only be too happy to oblige.

Deputy R.G. Le Hérisier:

Thank you very much. I would like to thank the witnesses very much and the members of the public for attending. Obviously, given the speed of this and given the fact we are trying to get comments out that will roughly coincide with the Green Paper, they are going to be comments, it is not going to be a study of world systems of school measurement, our view so to speak. We clearly cannot quite get into that but there will be comments. We may well ... this is terrible because we often tend to do this, we may well make recommendations like for future research, for example, that would obviously be the way forward. It is very unlikely at this stage, because of the States timetable, because of their issues with running full scrutiny panels at the moment and so forth, it is very unlikely when we get the Green Paper we will be able to say: "We are now going to start a massive review of secondary education." We are going to have to think about how to do

that. The States timetable is probably not going to allow that in that way unfortunately. So we will obviously think about that as a panel, how we approach it. But I warn you about that. So we may say there is a need for more research here, there is a need for this and at this stage it will definitely be general comments, it will not be, as I said, in depth analysis of the kind we would like. So thank you all very much indeed. That ends the session.

[14:17]