



Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel

Post-16 Education

Witness: Highlands College

Friday, 8th March 2019

Panel:

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

Deputy T. Pointon of St. John (Acting Deputy Chairman)

Witnesses:

Mr. S. Lewis, Principal, Highlands College

Ms. J. Marchant, Deputy Principal, Highlands College

Ms. D. Collins, Assistant Principal, Students and Core Learning, Highlands College

Mr. L. Johnson, Assistant Principal, Curriculum and Quality, Highlands College

Ms. T. Upstell, Assistant Principal, Planning, Skills and Employment, Highlands College

Mr. R. Moy, Executive Director, Highlands College

[09:02]

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

Thank you. Welcome to the public hearing with the post-16 review. Can I draw your attention to the piece of paper in front of you, which just gives you the legal background to the hearings? They are being broadcast live and there will be a transcript. We have talked about phones. There are no members of the public here at the moment, but hopefully they are all watching online. I will just start off by briefly introducing ourselves. I am Deputy Robert Ward. I am Chairman of the Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel.

Deputy T. Pointon of St. John (Acting Deputy Chairman):

I am Trevor Pointon, Deputy of St. John. I am the Acting Deputy Chairman of the Scrutiny Panel.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Would you like to start?

Assistant Principal, Students and Core Learning, Highlands College:

I am Dreena Collins. I am the Assistant Principal for Students and Core Learning at Highlands College.

Assistant Principal, Curriculum and Quality, Highlands College:

I am Lee Johnson. I am the Assistant Principal for Curriculum and Quality at Highlands College.

Deputy Principal, Highlands College:

I am Jo-Terry Marchant. I am the Deputy Principal of Highlands College.

Principal, Highlands College:

I am Steve Lewis. I am the Principal of Highlands College.

Executive Director, Highlands College:

I am Robert Moy. I am the Executive Director of Business Operations at Highlands College.

Assistant Principal, Planning, Skills and Employment, Highlands College:

Good morning. I am Tina Upstell and I am the Assistant Principal for Planning, Skills and Employment here at Highlands.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Brilliant, thank you very much. First of all, I would like to say thank you for the access you gave to your students. When we spoke to your students, without being funny, it was probably the most enlightening thing we have done throughout the post-16 review, and talking to students is always the best thing we have done. We have had a survey of students as well and it is excellent, the engagement we have got in that. I do not know the final current figures, but over 2,000 students would have engaged in that across the Island. We talk about transparency and listening to children and young people and that is exactly what we have tried to do with this review, so absolutely superb, and I will say that to the other institutions as well. If we start off just by asking - and I know there has been quite a lot of information - for a brief overview of the provision that is offered by Highlands College, if you can.

Principal, Highlands College:

If we just focus on 16 to 19 - because the college obviously does lots of adult courses and higher education, but the review is on the 16 to 19 - we cater for about 48 per cent of the 16 to 19 population

of school leavers in Jersey. We are a provider of technical and vocational education, so we do not do academic education, almost deliberately, so it is an alternative provision for students who have got an idea of what kind of work placement and employment they want to go into. We are a comprehensive institution in the sense that we are the only institution in Jersey that takes students who have not met the school leaving threshold of 5 G.C.S.E.s (General Certificate of Secondary Education), Grades 4 to 9 now, although that cohort has got smaller, so of roughly about 750 students, about 275 are at that level where they spend a year with us getting to the next level. In the last 4 years, we have seen an amazing increase from 48 per cent of our students, that were at what is called Level 2, which is school leaving level, to now 71 per cent being at Level 3, which is the A Level equivalent. Like any general further education college, we have a broad spectrum of about 18 different technical areas. I do not know if I can do them all off the top of my head, but there is construction and all the things that align with that, the services industries like catering, hairdressing and beauty, there are more general areas like sport and creative arts, business, computing, and of course I must not forget health and social care and childcare, so all those. Have I covered everything? Motor vehicle. You can see it is any kind of service or occupation that you will be familiar with that you get a service from, we are training all the young people in those industries. Also not to forget, as someone reminded me last evening, it is a little-known fact that of course we also take students from Mont à l'Abbé, so that diversifies the population even more. Again, without the college, students who are differently abled, have particular needs, when they leave Mont à l'Abbé - and they tend to stay at Mont à l'Abbé, it can be up to 18 - and then they come to us at 18 to 21.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Thank you. One of the particular features of Highlands is the Progression Qualification. Can you briefly explain what that is, the crux of it, so to speak?

Principal, Highlands College:

It is a unique initiative. It is something that I feel - I speak for myself - that England badly needs, where is space between students that do not achieve at Level 2 when they leave school. The qualifications that in England they would go on to is a whole raft of vocational qualifications which are even lower levels than they have left school at. What we have done is to use, if you like, Jersey's freedom of being our own jurisdiction of being able to create a qualification which suits the needs of Island students. It has been devised locally. English and maths G.C.S.E. goes alongside it. It has been validated, and it is externally validated and standardised by an awarding body called NCFE, which is the third largest awarding body in England. We have created something, and I think that is probably why the number of students from Level 2 to Level 3 has gone up significantly in 2 years, because of the introduction of that programme. The English education system is the most regulated in the whole of the world, not just Europe, and it does that because England is such a large country. Our colleagues in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, Isle of Man and Guernsey do not have to

follow those regulations. You can probably tell I have been around long enough, from C.S.E. (Certificate of Secondary Education) Mode 3 days, when the whole ethos of education was that teachers were best-placed to devise and design the curriculum and design the best way in which you could assess it. What this did was to give our staff an opportunity to devise a curriculum which they were in charge of and could create. Its main objective is to get students to the place where they can cope with the recognised - for want of a better word - industry qualification at the level they need to be at, which is Level 3, because no employer really wants to be taking students at level 1 or 2. There are not many jobs around anymore for people who have just got school leaving G.C.S.E. level qualifications.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

You are saying that 71 per cent of your students are on a Level 3 qualification now?

Principal, Highlands College:

Now.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Was it the qualification that was holding them back before? What was it about that qualification that was holding them back that has been, if you like, cured by the Jersey Progression Qualification?

Principal, Highlands College:

If you think about G.C.S.E.s, G.C.S.E. is a Level 1 and a Level 2 qualification, so if you do not make it up to Grade 4 and you are at Grade 1 to 3, that is deemed to be Level 1, so you have not gone into the Level 2 space. What was happening was that in vocational qualifications, they are not combined like that. You have a discrete Level 1, a discrete Level 2 and then a discrete Level 3. What was happening was that students were coming to us and then dropping back to Level 1, particularly in areas like hairdressing and culinary arts and construction and all those subjects. From my experience at previous colleges, what happens is that students are not very well challenged and motivated if they are doing something that is easier. The Wolf report, which is the last major report on vocational qualifications in England, demonstrated that colleges in England were milking the system by basically improving their success rates by getting students to be on easier qualifications in the first place, but it was taking students 3 years to go through the system rather than 2. But the figure in England has not changed, it is still about 300,000 out of the 1.1 million that take qualifications post-16 do not get beyond Level 2. We have bucked the trend and we have demonstrated that our students can do that.

Deputy Principal, Highlands College:

It was also the opportunity it provided for our vocational staff, who are dual professionals, so they are already experienced in a vocational area. For example, in something like computing, they have often worked in computing in the industry for a number of years and are qualified and then we train them to be lecturers as well. It is an opportunity for those people to take their direct industry experience and inform the development of the qualification. For example, childcare worked with registration in the department to make sure that the qualification could reflect our local needs in Jersey. Some of the qualifications we were doing before, which were on the Q.C.F. (Qualifications and Credit Framework), they learnt a lot of things about the U.K. (United Kingdom) context and not enough about Jersey. For example, they might be going into the care sector, where the regulations are different, the local requirements are slightly different, and yet they were spending a lot more time on preparing for a U.K. context. It enabled us to customise it to Jersey needs. The thing that we need to make clear is it is validated, as Steve has said, by NCFE, the third largest awarding organisation, so in no way is the assessment weak or it is not having appropriate checks. We have a U.K. moderator who comes in, samples all the work and throughout the year we have internal quality assessments, which Lee leads on, checking the quality of the work. The proof is in the pudding, in the sense that students are going on to Level 3 in greater numbers and are being successful. We are doing constant checks on that, for example, Alps, which measures value added at Level 3, so it looks at the starting point of a student coming on to the course and it measures the impact of the teaching and learning on that course and it is compared nationally against Department for Education (England) data. Now, the assessments that we have done have shown that students that have progressed from the Jersey Progression Qualification on to Level 3 are outperforming students direct entry from the schools. That is against national benchmarks. We also have done a lot of work comparing Jersey Premium students, of which we had 179 last year, which was only a slice of 16 to 18 of our cohort; obviously we have students who are 19 years old.

[09:15]

That represents about 27 per cent of our full-time students who are on Jersey Premium, so they are either looked-after children or living in homes in receipt of income support. We know internationally the impact that economic disadvantage has on achievement, but we have done work to look at the impact of the Jersey Progression Qualification and the outcome for students who are Jersey Premium students. They were outperforming students who were not on the Premium, so there is another example of how effective it has been in raising achievement.

The Deputy of St. John:

I have got personal experience of a granddaughter who has been to Highlands and is now at university. She clearly progressed to Level 3 and went on to gain qualifications sufficient to get to university. At Level 3, what are you benchmarking, what are you comparing with?

Principal, Highlands College:

At Level 3, we do use all the U.K. regulated qualifications.

The Deputy of St. John:

I suspect it is such because they would not have accepted the qualification in the university in the U.K.

Principal, Highlands College:

I think that is the Jersey Progression Qualification, that its purpose is to enable students to get to the position where they can take a qualification which will get them there. ...It is basically progressing them on to the qualification that is either the industry standard qualification for say something like motor vehicle or hairdressing or on to the Level 3 that has U.C.A.S. (Universities and Colleges Admissions Service) points, the same as A Level, which will get them into a university. If you take areas particularly like business, childcare and health and social care, the qualification that we do is the equivalent to 3 A Levels, and depending on the grade profile that the student comes out with, that will give them the equivalent U.C.A.S. points as if they were doing 3 A Levels, therefore that is an entry into higher education in the U.K. or into our own higher education.

The Deputy of St. John:

So you are really quite a sophisticated environment for students to work in and you are leading into opportunities?

Principal, Highlands College:

Yes.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

They are BTECS, are they not?

Principal, Highlands College:

Yes.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

They are the new BTEC that you use. I know there are changes and we will come back to some of those later on. What happens to those who do not progress on the Progression Qualification, because there will inevitably be some? What checks and balances are you ... because that is a significant increase to Level 3, which is the equivalent to A Level. What checks are you putting in to make sure that they are coping at A Level? The reason I ask is one of the things about our review is to ensure that the qualifications are the right qualifications in enabling young people to get to where they want to be in the long term. That is the basis behind the question. So I am not catching anyone out, that is the basis behind it.

Assistant Principal, Curriculum and Quality, Highlands College:

That is quite a lot in there. We benchmark against the E.S.F.A. (Education and Skills Funding Agency) standards, which the English Government sets, and we follow their regulations in terms of how we benchmark against U.K. colleges. At the start point, we have a robust interview process for students who may have a question mark around them. If you have got the entry requirements, we will progress you there, then we will pick you up as part our right choice review processing. Within the first 6 weeks, all of the students have to have a review: "Are you on the right programme? Are you studying at the right level?" There we see about a 5 per cent shift. Just going up, you may have got 4 G.C.S.E.s and you are working at that level, or maybe there is the chance that you have dropped out, then throughout the year, there are a series of student reviews, usually about 4 points in the year where the college will start reviewing performance. We also have a very sophisticated at-risk system underpinning that. Dreena's team will do a lot of work around Learner Voice. We have externality in terms of our professional practice and review area provision specifically to see how our performance is. There is literally an integrated quality cycle which is something like 100 events in there over the year to make sure we are doing the right things at the right time to make sure our students achieve.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

There is an awful lot of terminology in there and this is a public hearing. Effectively, when you do these reviews, who are they undertaken by? Are they undertaken by the teachers of those students?

Assistant Principal, Curriculum and Quality, Highlands College:

They are.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

How much say do those teachers have? Because I believe the teachers probably know their students better than anybody, so you listen to them, and if they say: "You are not in the right qualification, you need to move up/move down" so there is that movement within the college?

Assistant Principal, Curriculum and Quality, Highlands College:

They make that call. That is their call.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Is that in conjunction with the student?

Assistant Principal, Curriculum and Quality, Highlands College:

Students and parents, because obviously we need to communicate things. If you envision a context where the tutor will make that recommendation in the first instance, that will be agreed by the head of department, who will then contact the parents and have a sort of conversation: "This is what we think is the best thing for your son or daughter or whoever." Then the final sign-off will be at A.P. (assistant principal) level. We will be in a room and say: "What are the changes? Who is going where? Why are we doing this?" so we all fully understand it. That will happen basically 4 times throughout the year. What we are looking at beyond that is how you are performing against your target grade. Is the student likely to achieve the full qualification, i.e. 3 A Levels or are we looking at a 2 A Level equivalent? We will start to tailor at that point: "Does that student need more time in English? Does that student need more time in maths? Does that student need more work experience opportunities? What does that individual learner need?"

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Just to pick up, I am quite interested in that, because when we look at traditional A Levels and we look at BTECs and so on, that tracking is, to some extent - whether it is accurate or not is another question - easier, because you have got a specific grade. With the Jersey Progression Qualification, I would not imagine you have a grade. Do you have a level? Do you have a flight path? I warn you now, this sort of triggers in me ... that nature of linear progression worries me enormously. I think we have agreed on that. What are you looking for? I am just trying to get a feel for it, because it is different.

Assistant Principal, Curriculum and Quality, Highlands College:

We have something we call a starting point. The Jersey Progression Qualification, in the first year we said: "We would like the majority of our students to achieve with merit within that qualification." What we found though in year 2 and year 3 of the Jersey Progression Qualification that merit has been exceeded, so our average grade under J.P.Q. (Jersey Progression Qualification) is now distinction. So we will not worry too much around flight path at Level 2, because that is about getting students prepared to progress to Level 3. It is really at that point where we will start the intense mapping with Alps scores. We pitch our Alps scores at the top 25 per cent, so if you come into Highlands College with quite a low ... I say low, from a zero to a 4 average for your points score, we

will pitch you at a distinction and merit to be aspirational. That will be monitored. Tutorials will underpin that to make sure students are working towards it aspirationally. Then right at the end of the year, we will do a summary of how we have performed. You have probably seen those results before, so each department then will receive a grade from Alps and that will range from AA1, which is red hot, to AA9 in terms of their general academic performance. We find we are working overall at a 4, which by Alps standards is good. We have some areas which are 2, we have some areas which are 6s, but we are generally where we need to be in terms of our academic performance.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

We will move on from this. I just have one comment. This is really interesting. It seems to me that the change to the J.P.Q. has produced this leap in achievement, which is then going on to the national standard of achievement. If they are suddenly working at distinction, will that increase the predicted grades at that Level 3?

Assistant Principal, Curriculum and Quality, Highlands College:

No. We take their G.C.S.E. element. There are 2 different ways to measure value added, so there is the academic Alps route, which takes in G.C.S.E.s only, and then you have got value added, which takes in all qualifications achieved in a student's lifetime. Now, we made a decision to go with Alps for the academic route for our qualifications, so the J.P.Q. is about progression, we have got you ready, we have got you there for the 4 G.C.S.E.s, that is good, but what we have been working on underpinning it is about getting you reading to study at Level 2 so you can progress. That is what that year is really about, some skills, but really getting you prepared for whatever happens.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Just to say, sorry, if they do not progress from that, are they ready, with a Level 2 qualification, to go out into the world of work and it is recognised?

Assistant Principal, Curriculum and Quality, Highlands College:

They are. They are walking out with the 4 G.C.S.E. equivalent and a handful of skills from every area. Now, in your traditional areas, so your Level 2s, your motor vehicle, your hair and beauty areas, they are more skills-dependent, so yes, they do go out maybe in ...

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Sorry, just to really focus in on this - and this is what I am trying to do - do businesses on the Island understand that? Because I know how difficult it is with the changes in G.C.S.E. to Cs and 1s to 4s. I can remember O Levels et cetera. All of those changes need to be understood and when you have got something that is distinctly Jersey, which it is not a judgment on whether it is good, bad or indifferent, but it is just different ...

Principal, Highlands College:

I think it is fair to say that the J. P.Q. is not about going straight into work. In a way, what you said earlier about teachers knowing their students best, that is the whole point of the J.P.Q., about teachers getting to know them. Because do not forget, normally if a student comes straight from one of the 11 to 16 schools or from Hautlieu to us, we do not know them. We do not know, so we have to find out, and we are just relying on their school results, whereas if they come to us and spend a year on the J.P.Q., we get to know them. Therefore there is a distinction between what are called technical areas, so areas like motor vehicle and construction, whereas it may sound like they are going sideways to a Level 2 professional qualification, but those professions have always traditionally ... as Lee said, you then have what is called a licence to practice in things like motor vehicle at a certain level, at Level 2. What we made a conscious decision on is that, yes, we could say all students could come and do the next level in hairdressing and the Island would probably have far more hairdressers than it would need. In those areas where we know there is a particular market, the progression route is through apprenticeship and through "Trackers". Once they have got the J.P.Q., the J.P.Q. leads to ... it is a kind of assurance, if you like, a badge, that they are going to cope with the apprenticeship in that area. Other areas, what I would call more general subjects like childcare, they have more traditionally been Level 3 professions, so I think ...

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Do you think that is going to help with the ... sorry, just there were so many things that have come out of this review, a million things going on in my head. There were reports about the shortage in the care sector, particularly around the Les Amis, we are very concerned about. Will that sort of qualification help address that particular Jersey issue, where people need to get into that sector? I know there are other issues in terms of pay and so on, absolutely aware of those, but could they, at the end of that part of the J.P.Q., without progressing to Level 3, go into an apprenticeship within that care sector?

Principal, Highlands College:

No, and I do not think we would want them to, because most of these students would only be 17 at that point, so they would not be mature enough, they would not be experienced enough to be able to work ...

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Would they repeat that year? This is what I am trying to ... if they do not quite make that, because there is no point in putting a student forward if they are not ready for it. You are setting them up for failure and that is problem with a lot of G.C.S.E.s. Would they repeat that year? Would they just extend the year, would they extend it over 2 years? Is it tailored?

Deputy Principal, Highlands College:

Dreena could talk in more detail about this, but what we do is ... and we do this at Level 3 as well. If the needs of the students are such - and this is the minority - where we might extend their programme, that their Level 3 is over 3 years, for example, if they have a diagnosed mental health condition, which we have a rising challenge across the education sector in all schools and at Highlands College, so there are different provisions. We will tailor, and we have got more flexibility to do that than schools have, but we will tailor the provision to enable that student to achieve when it is right for them, with all the appropriate support that we could put in place. I do not know if you want to add anything, Dreena.

Assistant Principal, Students and Core Learning, Highlands College:

Yes. We have had students, because of their barriers to learning, there might be certain units they are not looking to achieve that year. Well, rather than say that: "You have not achieved the whole qualification" we would bank their achievement that year and they might carry on the next year. It is almost like a reduced timetable for them and they extend it over 2 years and then they have got capacity for support in the gaps around that.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Is that the Level 2 part of the J.P.Q. or the Level 3?

Assistant Principal, Students and Core Learning, Highlands College:

Yes.

Deputy Principal, Highlands College:

We would tailor it entirely.

Assistant Principal, Students and Core Learning, Highlands College:

According to the end date, effectively, the completion day.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

I think this links into the questions we have on barriers to progression, barriers to education on the Island, because there is a sector of our young people who ... I always used to say when I was a teacher: "You will have your time in education. It will come, so never give up on it" and I think that is a really important point. Sorry, we are going to move forward, because we have taken a long time on it, but that was very useful.

The Deputy of St. John:

Yes. I am conscious that it is getting cool in here. Is everybody warm enough? The Chairman turned the air-conditioning system down.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

It was like an oven when we came in.

The Deputy of St. John:

If you are warm enough, that is fine.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Press that button, the green button. Andy will do it.

[09:30]

Deputy Principal, Highlands College:

Could I just make ... I think just to be a bit mindful of the external audience and in education how many sectors we have got, a lot of acronyms and a lot of terminology that we use. I am a parent of 2 children. What I would say is this: to think about the J.P.Q. as a retake year. It is that opportunity for those students, for whatever reason - and I am not blaming the schools here, I am just saying the barriers were there - which meant that they were not able, at that point, to achieve their potential. It is absolutely right. It is a moral and social purpose that we are fulfilling in offering them that opportunity to retake, develop their English and maths and develop some vocational skills and it is a significant piece of work.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

This is controversial, but we can talk about this: I think it is important to have the diet of G.C.S.E. is what might be failing as well in terms of it just does not suit some students.

Deputy Principal, Highlands College:

That was part of the issue in Level 2 before, because before we had NCFE, we were on the new N.Q.F. (National Qualifications Framework) Level 2 and 75 per cent of the students were passing at Level 2. That had examinations in it. It was very assessment-heavy. It meant that the lecturers were spending a lot of time preparing them for the tests rather than developing the skills that they needed to go into the industry, so that is another reason why we changed the offer.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

That is very interesting.

The Deputy of St. John:

Just a general question to move into the rest, and that is what do you think your main successes are besides what sounds like a very successful J.P.Q.?

Assistant Principal, Students and Core Learning, Highlands College:

I think something that is important that we have sort of touched on, but we have not elaborated, is that when they are studying at that level, it is a whole programme of study, it is not just the J.P.Q. We offer our students a kind of wraparound support and access to enrichment activities and the sorts of things that we think will develop their confidence and skills. Especially with nearly 30 per cent of the students being entitled to Premium, that means they have got a lot of risk factors to potentially falling out of education and becoming unemployed. We are looking to offer them volunteering opportunities, sports opportunities. We embed employability skills within the qualification, and they self-assess themselves and they benchmark. We have very high levels of work experience, over 95 per cent of the students take work experience, so they are not just doing a kind of academic classroom-based diet. We are hoping that we can bridge some of the gaps there to kind of create a bit of social mobility for them by building on their confidence and other skills.

The Deputy of St. John:

You obviously have a relationship with employers, because people do not get work experience unless you do. What types of industries are you involved with?

Assistant Principal, Students and Core Learning, Highlands College:

They do work experience on every fulltime course, but it is different models depending on which industry it is. It is harder to do in some industries than others because of the expected levels and all sorts of different factors. They might do a block placement of a few weeks in a placement or they might go out one day a week, different models depending on the industry. For our full-time students, we have got a very small employability team who help to co-ordinate that, but the tutors do a lot of hard work around it and have their own industry contacts because they have come from their industries themselves. I do not know if anybody wants to add anything to that.

Principal, Highlands College:

I think the other important thing to emphasise is that the J.P.Q., 10 per cent of it - and the units, which is 10 per cent - is called employability, so every student on the J.P.Q. has to have at least a week's work experience somewhere. We use a piece of kit called Navigate, which allows the employer to feed back on how they are doing. That involves preparing for interview, preparing their

C.V. (curriculum vitae) and all that kind of thing. That is a core unit that is in common with all subjects, so I suppose that is what makes it unique.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Can I ask you a question which is slightly ahead, if you do not mind? Jersey Premium stops at the end of year 11. You have 27 per cent of your students who have Jersey Premium. Do you ...

Deputy Principal, Highlands College:

It is a serious challenge for us. We had pilot funding for one year, which equated to £73,000, and so did Hautlieu have pilot funding. We have experienced a lot of success with the work we have done with Premium students, who have greater needs, but that funding is now being withdrawn. Because it was treated as a pilot, we are making representations, we are constantly evaluating the work that we do with those students. We are hopeful that will be revisited in the new M.T.F.P. (Medium Term Financial Plan) in 2020 at least, but certainly for 2019, there is no additional funding for those students. Yet of course, as Steve has already alluded to, under any measure, it is something we all feel great pride about and every member of the staff in Highlands College is committed to. We are the most inclusive institution, through age, through background, through levels, through starting points and I believe we are one of the many jewels of the educational crown, as it were. But funding for those students, who have so many barriers to learning, needs to be better.

Principal, Highlands College:

It is simple things, like if we are going to get students into work and they are on work experience and they do not have a decent pair of shoes or they do not have the right kit to wear, then they are not going to succeed.

The Deputy of St. John:

You have lost funding. How has it affected you? To get this on to record, there must have been some damage from losing the funding.

Deputy Principal, Highlands College:

Yes. The funding, we have just had the new budgets in. We have not even reviewed the allocations. At the moment we also set aside, through the governing body, hardship access funds. We are putting through our café, as much as we can, free food allocations for some of those students. But it is increasingly difficult. For example, we have a new area in our library really to support learning. We are incentivising attendance to it by giving them food vouchers and incentivising attendance to English and maths by giving them food vouchers, but that is drawing on the money that we got from the Premium funds, so that will necessarily run out.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Do you think - and obviously not specific cases ...

Deputy Principal, Highlands College:

No, of course not.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

... is there evidence of any students who are not continuing with their education post-16 because of financial barriers?

Deputy Principal, Highlands College:

If you look at the September registration to the November census point, so that is the point when the figures go into education, okay, the students who are in families in receipt of income support and are looked-after children, 10 per cent of those have already withdrawn, whereas the overall figure is only 4 per cent. Now, things like we have just got a bus service organised because we were not part of the bus service contract for schools, so simply, if you do not have enough money, it is difficult for you to get into college and of course we draw from all across the Island.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

For example, if there was a free bus service, would that encourage more students?

Deputy Principal, Highlands College:

Yes, it would. Yes.

Assistant Principal, Curriculum and Quality, Highlands College:

For me, that is our biggest challenge in terms of being all we can be at the college. We are a good college; we provide a good service. We are the most inclusive institution on the Island in terms of education. But I am from a different context; my context is an English one. I have been in Jersey for 2 years and I know that working from an English education model, Highlands College is underfunded when it is set against an English funding model for further education in a period of austerity. I also know that in terms of general funding - I do not know if I can put this on record - Highlands is funded 50 per cent of what Guernsey College is funded per headcount. I know I have got 107 I.T. (information technology) students at the moment who are being trained in a portacabin. We just do not have the money to invest in making our next steps to really drive our quality forward. That is our largest challenge.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

This is a public forum and if you want to say something about money, please feel free. It is an important part of the review, to look at funding, and we are very aware of that and that has come up as a theme, not just from yourselves, so please do.

Principal, Highlands College:

We have managed to retain our income of just over £12 million, but our income from the States has reduced by £1 million over that time and we have replaced it by £1 million of earned income by all sorts of means. But our creative juices are gradually running out in terms of how we can continue with that. What we have found, as we looked more closely at the way we are funded, is that even money which is not sufficient, as Lee says ... I mean, the funding rate in England is about £,200 at the moment and our funding rate is about £5,700, but the teaching costs in Jersey are 37 per cent higher than they are in England and our overhead costs and all those things. Because we have to provide a service for all Islanders, we have to have the same breadth of curriculum that a college twice, 3, 4 times the size of us in England would have. But we do not have the economies of scale in terms of being able to run large groups. We have got a fantastic catering facility, but it costs the same to run if we had 30 students or we have got 10, so we have those issues. What has come to light, and it has caused some controversy, is that the money that we have been getting, when we start to analyse it, was being used to subsidise other provision. For instance, if you take our higher education provision, that was not making the same kind of return to the whole college infrastructure as our 16 to 19s were, so they were subsidising that provision. We have got the same issue with apprenticeships, where we give half the amount of time to an apprentice as a full-time student, but we only get roughly about £1,600, at most, for an apprentice compared to a full-time student. We have had to gradually look at things. We run a huge and highly valued and really important adult education programme for about 2,000 adults in the Island, but we have had to put the prices up slightly more than we would want to because, again, we were using money that was aimed at 16 to 19 year-olds to subsidise people mostly ... our average in our adult education is about 68. But I think it is just as valuable for people that are retired to keep their minds alive to have that provision. But in a way, that is another argument for a different review. But the point we are trying to make is that it has been stretched thinner and thinner and, as Lee has intimated, we have just got to the point where we know teaching and learning could be absolutely outstanding in the college, but our newest computer is 4 years old. It is all that kind of stuff. I think for £1 million, we would transform the college in a year to be one of the best in the world.

Deputy Principal, Highlands College:

To take it down on to that sort of human level of what you are talking about, culinary arts is a perfect example. We have just had the Heat 2019 competition, where colleges from around the U.K. have competed to come to Jersey and it has all kind of cross-cultural benefits et cetera, competing with

the best. Now, we have 7 students on that Level 2 technical certificate. If it was a financial decision, we would not run that course, but where are those students going to go? We need people in the hospitality and catering sector, so it is uneconomic, but it is a social decision we need to make for the better of the Island.

The Deputy of St. John:

If you scrap the course, there would not be anywhere for the politicians to go at Christmas.

Deputy Principal, Highlands College:

No, indeed.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

The barriers then, so finance is a genuine barrier to access?

Deputy Principal, Highlands College:

Yes, yes.

Principal, Highlands College:

Absolutely.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

What are the others? What other barriers do you think there are? Is one of them - and I will ask frankly - how you are seen on the Island as the college? Because there is a very distinct structure to Jersey's post-16 education. That was beautifully diplomatic, okay? There is a very distinct structure and how do you think you are seen within the Island?

[09:45]

We have heard about the good things and we ...

Deputy Principal, Highlands College:

We think the perception is changing, but it is still there, that we are a second-choice institution. Partly our estate does not help with that, so the students come from - in comparison with Highlands College - newer schools with better facilities. I know they are not perfect, but they are certainly in a better condition than our estate, so the physical impression is not good. They feel like they are going backwards, but that is one element. I think it is also to do with the national view of how vocational education is seen in the U.K. and how it is funded. There is a big campaign going on in the U.K. about that at the moment, so that we would like to look at offering A Levels for some of our students.

We have done it before, perhaps AS provision, because what we find is that students are having to make a choice by institution and that is determining the qualifications they take, rather than look at the child or young person. What is it that they need and what do we provide for them to enable them to have the greatest opportunities in life, whether that is to go into the workplace at 18 or 19 or whether it is to go to university? We think that is a change in our curriculum offer, but that would require training, investment and some resources. That is another barrier.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Do you think there is scope for greater collaboration between the different institutions that are so close to each other?

Deputy Principal, Highlands College:

Absolutely, and in the past we have worked together with senior staff at Hautlieu. We have got a joint governing body liaison meeting that myself and the principal sit on on a termly basis. We do confer and work with one another, but the way that timetabling is is a major block at the moment. Hautlieu's timetable is largely driven by their I.B. (International Baccalaureate) provision and also the A Level provision. When our students have tried to access an AS it has been in very small numbers and very difficult to facilitate.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Is that partly because they have students from year 9, so they still have that school-day structure?

Deputy Principal, Highlands College:

Yes, and that also presents challenge. We share Oakfield sports facility, which is the right thing to do. We have a 50 per cent share, but of course because P.E. (physical education) is compulsory at Key Stage 4, what tends to happen is our students have the slots around that. Do you see what I mean?

Deputy R.J. Ward:

That makes sense, yes. I was going to ask, because we were very interested, we went to the U.K. to look at a college and we looked at a conference there, as you know, but the U.K. seems to be ... I cannot remember the figure, I think it was 200,000 students who take a BTEC and one A level in the U.K. It is around that number. I had it written down, but I have not got it with me, but also T Levels. The T Levels appear to me to be a reaction to giving, if you like - I will say this - vocational qualifications a sort of academic credibility.

Deputy Principal, Highlands College:

Yes.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

I am not saying they have not, that is not what I am saying at all - I would never say that, I would not dare - but do you think there is any position for T Levels in Jersey?

Deputy Principal, Highlands College:

There are restrictions.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

I know there are certain restrictions, but there are some that we thought might fit, when we think about the needs of Jersey, which are quite specific at times.

Principal, Highlands College:

I think the jury is out on T Levels at the moment, but at the moment they are a licensed, England-only qualification.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

It is a trial, is it not, a pilot?

Principal, Highlands College:

Yes, and only colleges in England have to apply for it anyway, but until we know whether the qualification element of the T Level will be available outside, I am not sure whether we will be able to access it anyway. My view is that I do not think we should be looking to England as the model of what we do in terms of vocational education. If you look at Scotland, it is almost the reverse, three-quarters of the students who do apprenticeships and do vocational qualifications in Scotland are 16 to 25, whereas in England it is completely the reverse. So it is almost what you might call an English disease, and I do not know whether it is because of the public school system or whatever, but most of the Government that I have ever spoken to in England does not even know what an F.E. (further education) college looks like, does not even know what a vocational qualification looks like, because that has not been their experience of education. So to be fair, Nick Hancock was the first person in any position who had got there through a BTEC National, so it is a longstanding issue in England. I was at a conference this week and I said to a D.f.E. (Department for Education, England) official: "The academic view of England's way of dealing with qualifications is what is called policy amnesia." England just does not seem to learn from the mistakes of the past and it is probably not generally known, but "The Diploma under the Blair Government was something like £300 million just down the drain, a qualification that just did not work. My worry is that the T Levels look suspiciously like The Diploma, but I suppose the caveat to that is that at least this is going to be piloted properly to see if it works. So I think from a Jersey point of view it is watch this space.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

That is really interesting.

The Deputy of St. John:

We have talked clearly about the able students that can progress through the system to go into work and university and so on and so forth, but there is a group of students who have emotional learning difficulties, and I was wondering what you are providing for them.

Assistant Principal, Students and Core Learning, Highlands College:

We run a provision for students who have more severe learning difficulties or more severe challenges at what we would call about Entry 2 Level, which equates to primary Key Stage 2 level in terms of academic standards, but it is not about that, it is about life skills, developing independence, promoting independence for those students. So a number of those students would come from Mont à l'abbé, but not all of them. Some of them would come from what they call resource provisions in schools, so they might have physical needs, they might have autistic spectrum conditions, or they might just have been a mainstream student in school who now needs to go on to something that will enable them to live independently and that is a course that you can take for 2 or 3 years. We also run our Pathways course, which is around Entry 3 to Level 1, so they are mainly students who have got maybe one or 2 low-level G.C.S.E.s and it is quite a mixed provision in terms of the cohort, because it could be somebody who has been disaffected at school and not attended, but is average ability. But there is limited evidence and they are going to need a year to improve their attendance and to backfill some of that lost learning or they might have learning difficulties. That course is quite flexible in terms of the level that they might come out with, so this year we will have students coming out with Entry 3 qualifications, but some of them will come out with some Level 2 units, which is the same level as the J.P.Q., so we try to tailor that a little bit and we have different ability levels for the maths part of it as well.

The Deputy of St. John:

Some of these people would have been those that presented with difficult behavioural problems at school.

Assistant Principal, Students and Core Learning, Highlands College:

Oh, yes.

The Deputy of St. John:

Do you experience difficult behavioural problems in the college?

Assistant Principal, Students and Core Learning, Highlands College:

I think our students are very well-behaved, and I think that the environment suits that, but there are always going to be some students that struggle with any educational institution.

Deputy Principal, Highlands College:

Maybe you should add how many are on the inclusion register.

Assistant Principal, Students and Core Learning, Highlands College:

At 16 to 19 we would have over 120 students that would fit the special needs criteria. Over the whole of the college you are looking at more like 200, because they are students who go beyond who might stay within education or return to education, who might access some form of support, exam access arrangements, key workers, drop-in support, all sorts of things, or emotional support. More what we see, I would say, is to do with social and emotional rather than acting-out behaviours, concerns about things like self-harming or depression, those kinds of issues are more our concern than the challenging behaviour.

Deputy Principal, Highlands College:

That is where funding is also an issue. We looked at our Student Life Department, which is the hub for safeguarding the welfare of the students. They organise the enrichment. Our designated safeguarding officer heads that department. If I was to look in relation to the secondary school provision, which grew from the money some years ago some people may remember, we did not access that funding, so we do not have an attendance manager; that is not funded. If you looked at the learning support team we have about 15 members of staff.

Assistant Principal, Students and Core Learning, Highlands College:

It is 20 staff, but some of them only work 2 hours a week, so it is not 20 full-time staff. It is 5 or 6 people.

Deputy Principal, Highlands College:

It is 5 or 6 people for that range of needs.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

How many students do you have in total?

Assistant Principal, Curriculum and Quality, Highlands College:

We have 790 fulltime.

Assistant Principal, Students and Core Learning, Highlands College:

We have to be really creative about how we deliver it, so we try to offer things, like we might have support staff available in the library, so that rather than us always going out and allocating to students it is open access to anybody who needs it, and then we do have a small pot of delegated funding that is given to us from central education, which is allocated to students who have a record of need, so they are the students who have got the highest level of need. Not necessarily on life skills courses, I am talking about maybe a student with a physical need or profound deafness. Being on a mainstream course we have got students all over college with ... and the difference between Highlands and the schools is that they ordinarily have a specialism within the schools, so you are more likely to go to La Rocquier if you have a hearing loss, you are more likely to go to Les Quennevais if you have a physical need. Highlands, we take students from everywhere and they are more likely to progress to Highlands because of the range of levels that we offer, so we have to be really quite creative and responsive.

Deputy Principal, Highlands College:

I think that is tantamount to the support that the lecturing staff as well give to these young people, because we have very few serious behavioural issues.

Assistant Principal, Students and Core Learning, Highlands College:

That is because they are so well-supported by the staff.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

I am conscious of time and I want to get as much as possible, so I was going to ask about the collaboration among the post-16 institutions. Do you think there needs to be more; do you think you need more courses that are run throughout the post-16 provision on the Island? We know we have a very distinct group of providers. What is your view on that level of collaboration and where perhaps we could go with that?

Principal, Highlands College:

Jo and I were at the joint governing body we have once a term with Hautlieu yesterday and we collaborate as best we can, but structurally in terms of timetabling, in terms ...

Deputy R.J. Ward:

It has been mentioned, yes.

Principal, Highlands College:

Oh, you did.

Deputy Principal, Highlands College:

Just while you popped out, sorry.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

That was really clear, that was very clear.

Principal, Highlands College:

I think there is an opportunity.

Deputy Principal, Highlands College:

Particularly science. We have one room which accesses the facilities, but they in themselves, their 6th form has grown, and they are looking to expand their science labs, but certainly social care, sport, there is a range of subjects that would want to access that science provision. What we offer is very small through Access to HE (higher education) and we do a retake as well for animal management, so we could do so much more. We have so many people who register for the Access to HE course, who in fact what they want is to retake their science A Level.

Principal, Highlands College:

One of the barriers to collaboration, bearing in mind that Hautlieu and Highlands co-exist and are co-located, the reason why we cannot work closely together at the moment is because of the 14- 16 and the fact they have got Key Stage 4. So while we can have our students and their students, 6th formers, using Oakfield and working together we cannot on the safeguarding issues have the years 10 and 11 mixing. When we have attempted to get a group in using the science labs it has fallen at the first hurdle because what do we do about all of the students potentially mixing with compulsory age students? That is a very simple barrier to collaboration.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

To finish, I was going to ask you one thing, if you could wave a magic wand, what would you want? Give us 3 things that you would do in 3 minutes without hesitation or repetition, so to speak.

[10:00]

Deputy Principal, Highlands College:

Could we have a college campus that is fit for purpose? It is what our young people deserve. Nothing more, nothing less, and it is so central to the wellbeing of the Island, its economy, being able to deliver to the community, to adults and everything else. It is a major limiting factor in what we do.

The Deputy of St. John:

Your chances of achieving that are greater than getting a new staff member, I have to say, because Jersey does capital expenditure very well.

Deputy Principal, Highlands College:

Yes, thank you. That is good to know, Trevor, thank you.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Just to finish off, I was going to mention about recruitment and the issues of recruitment. Are you facing the same issues of recruitment? We know that there are issues with recruitment certainly throughout the U.K. and I do not want to go back to the U.K. again, but it is very well-documented in schools, just in terms of the range of field that you might get.

Deputy Principal, Highlands College:

Particularly in computing and digital and business, very difficult to find people. We look for people who have already been industry professionals, so they already take a pay cut to come into teaching because they want to share their knowledge and skills with the next generation, but as soon as they realise what it is going to cost them, their housing, the food, the local context, in many cases they are worse off and we have people who withdraw after we have offered them the job, when they find out the cost of living et cetera.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Thank you very much. If there is anything else you want to add, because we have gone smack bang on the hour, I believe. Anything else you want to finish with?

Deputy Principal, Highlands College:

Premium funding.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Yes. I did say 3 and you have only put 2 down, so you have got one left, so to speak.

Deputy Principal, Highlands College:

Only because it is accepted across the provision that needs to happen. Logically those young people's needs do not disappear when they are 16.

Assistant Principal, Students and Core Learning, Highlands College:

There is one little thing as well, if you are thinking very long term for our young people, is that the last census showed that we had much higher rates of working adults without any qualifications than the U.K., so if we want our young people to come through, engage in education and with good literacy and numeracy skills we have to think about our adult learning as well, because children learn to read on the laps of their parents. If they have had a negative experience or they have not accessed education themselves or they do not feel it is a part of their life, then for the young people we see coming through that is not going to be a part of their life either.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Obviously that also addresses the population issue in terms of skills need.

Assistant Principal, Curriculum and Quality, Highlands College:

I think that ties to the funding part of it, that there has got to be appropriate funding for the provision we run. If we are going to do that, someone has got to pay for it, and we find ourselves in a position where we are subsidising from the ...

Deputy R.J. Ward:

I am surprised you did not say funding first.

Principal, Highlands College:

I think the one inequity is that all our students have to pay an £80 entry fee, by all rights I think 16 to 19 should be free. I would rather not charge that. In England they have not been charging it for about the last 5 years, but the budget has got used to the student or the parent contributing roughly about £90 as a subscription fee to the college.

The Deputy of St. John:

A different subject altogether. We talked about you providing facilities for hospitality or finance, for a whole range of industries, tech and so on. What about agriculture? We have not focused on agriculture at all. Is that something you are considering?

Assistant Principal, Planning, Skills and Employment, Highlands College:

We are talking to Guernsey at the moment about starting horticulture and working in collaboration with them, because it is a very small market for us to go into and needs quite heavy resourcing, but the industry out there would welcome our support, so we are looking to collaborate pan-Island to try and only talked about it last week.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Thank you very much for your time and again thank you to your students for their input. We will produce a report in due course, and we hope you will read it.

[10:04]