



Children, Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel

Secondary Education Funding Review

Witness: The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning

Wednesday, 10th July 2024

Panel:

Deputy C. Curtis of St. Helier Central (Chair)

Connétable M. Labey of Grouville

Deputy B. B. de S.DV.M. Porée of St. Helier South

Witnesses:

Deputy R.J. Ward of St. Helier Central, The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning

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

Ms. A. Homer, Head of Finance Business Partnering

Mr. J. Williams, Programme Director, Education Reform

[15:30]

Deputy C. Curtis of St. Helier Central (Chair):

Welcome to this hearing of the Children, Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel. Today is 10th July. I would like to draw everyone's attention to the following. This hearing will be filmed and streamed live, the recording and transcript will be published afterwards on the States Assembly website. All electronic devices, including mobile phones, should be switched to silent. Now, for introductions. I am Deputy Catherine Curtis, the Chair of the panel.

Connétable M. Labey of Grouville:

My name is Mark Labey, Connétable of Grouville. I am the Vice-Chair of this panel.

Deputy B.B. de S.DV.M. Porée of St. Helier South:

I am Deputy Porée and I am a panel member.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Deputy Rob Ward, Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning.

Group Director, Education:

Seán O'Regan, Group Director of Education.

Head of Finance Business Partnering:

Anne Homer, Head of Business Partnering, supporting C.Y.P.E.S. (Children, Young People, Education and Skills).

Programme Director, Education Reform:

Jonathan Williams, Programme Director for Education Reform.

Deputy C. Curtis:

Thank you, everyone. We have one and a half hours for this hearing. I have the first questions. We have to go back in time a little bit seeing as this is a review of education funding. Firstly, if we just go back before your tenure, Minister, and look at the reviews in the past 3 to 4 years. We understand that the Education Reform Programme was established in response to the Independent School Funding Review and the Big Education Conversation from 2020. Can you describe what the Education Reform Programme has focused on with regards to secondary education in Jersey since then?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

I think there have been a number of areas in terms of the Education Reform Programme. One of them was the funding model itself because it was recognised in that review that there was a shortfall of around £5.5 million in school funding. There were repeated years where schools simply could not reach the end of year without an overspend and just maintain where they are. I think it is a really important point to make, all they were doing was maintaining their standard as set. There was not anything new going on. So that was addressed during the reform programme. There is an ongoing set of education reforms that came from it as well in terms of terms and conditions, in terms of hours, in terms of roles, of which there is a lot of consultation going on but they are ongoing now. The main change that came from that at the moment is the reform to the funding mechanism for schools. That was a move away from the A.W.P.U. (Average Weighted Pupil Unit) to a more, one might say,

complex but more refined system of funding, which took account of other areas. I am sure we will get some questions on those.

Deputy C. Curtis:

Yes. You mentioned a funding shortfall, that it was not really looking at new developments at the time and since then there has been ongoing reforms and a move away to a more holistic, a more complex funding formula. Has it actually delivered these points, do you think, for secondary education?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

It certainly delivers change to the funding mechanism. The funding mechanism now is more ... I think it is more targeted to need certainly. It has separated up simply from funding per pupil to funding ... well, a combination of factors which I have made a lot of notes on in my folder, which I will get out in a moment but I can remember it off the top of my head. So that is, if you like, funding for classes, a smaller focus on the number of pupils, funding for areas such as S.E.N. (Special Educational Needs) for Record of Need, and they are different things but that gap between those special educational needs identified but not entirely on a Record of Need, which is a deeper need. So it has recognised those. Also there were 2 other areas which I have written down in terms of the funding formula. But the point I would make, and I think one of the important points, is that what it gave is more security for schools in terms of their funding. Because with the A.W.P.U. losing students or student fluctuating numbers could have a significant effect on the funding amount, whereas funding classes ... and the example I have, if I take a second to explain it the way I see it, and I make these figures up just so I can add them up in my head, which is good. If you had 10 classes of 25 students, if you lost 10 students from that with the A.W.P.U. you lost 10 sets of funding, that could be a significant amount of money. With the model that we have now only a small proportion is set on the number of students but it is more the number of classes. So if you lose 10 students you still have 24 per class. You cannot lose a teacher and you do not have to lose a teacher with the model that we have now. If you lose 20 students, where previously you may have had to lose a class and a massive increase in sizes, again you do not have to do that because that impact is not as significant. But there are also other layers that go on top of the funding which are really important. If I can just get my pad out because I make some significant notes.

Deputy C. Curtis:

This might go into the next question about it, which is what are the future objectives as well for the Education Reform Programme? Again, what is still developing?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

In terms of funding, I think one of the things we have to do is a bit of refinement of where we are. For example, the other area around funding is around lower prior attainment. So there is a set amount with regards to lower prior attainment. That recognises all students from wherever their background is, if they have a lower prior attainment for whatever reason. They may need greater support in schools in order to move forward, to get to a level that we want them to be. There is an amount for multilingual learners across all schools that is shared between them. There is also obviously the Jersey Premium. Jersey Premium is something that is having an impact on the effect of socio-economic disadvantage on outcomes in schools. I think we are starting to see that but I would say that 10 years, really, it takes for Jersey Premium to impact. That is the evidence that came from the U.K. (United Kingdom) to really impact. It has been going for, what, 4 years or 5?

Group Director, Education:

We piloted it in 2016 and then started to roll out.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

A little bit longer than so we are starting to see some benefits from that. Those are the areas and I think it is about refinement and seeing those changes embed.

Deputy C. Curtis:

The future objectives is about building on what you have already?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Yes, absolutely. But also the work that is going on under the wider context of the Education Reform Programme and those discussions in terms of wider issues of schools, such as P.P.A. (Preparation, Planning and Assessment), which is planning time, contracts, the way that S.A. (School Action) points are distributed, what schools want to do. That is done in consultation with staff.

Deputy C. Curtis:

Planning time and, sorry, what was the other thing you mentioned?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

S.A. points, so responsibility points and whether there wants to be a change in the way that they may be allocated or seen.

Deputy C. Curtis:

Yes, I know, okay. So this is when some members of staff might be paid extra for the extra responsibility?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Yes, certain responsibilities such as a head of department or a head of house, that type of thing.

Deputy C. Curtis:

Great. Okay, thank you. The next question is the Independent School Funding Review which came out in 2020 had several headline recommendations. I was just having a look at them again. Like stronger governance, uplift to the Jersey Premium, quite a few different things like that. Can you explain how those recommendations have been addressed?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

The Jersey Premium uplift I will address first of all, because I have been very interested in the way that has gone. We are currently at a stage where we are just about equal to the U.K. but we have a slightly different approach to it. In the U.K. Jersey Premium simply follows a number of students. It is set and if you have 100 students, 100 students will get that amount, if you have 150 you will get that amount for 150. We have a set amount that is distributed for Jersey Premium. The reality is if there are more students that pupil premium amount will be less. Now, I think the way to solve that, I will state this in this public hearing, which I think is a useful thing to do, is to have that as - what is the phrase that I am looking for? Annually managed expenditure, like social security. So if more people apply for social security that money is available because it is recognised that they are fluctuating numbers. I think if we can adopt that for pupil premium it will be much more flexible for us. At the moment, we seem to be okay because the pupil premium seems to be working and the numbers are not fluctuating wildly I believe. So the amount set has us virtually - and I can tell you the figures - for example in comparison with the U.K. In primary in the U.K. it is £1,490 and we are £1,480, so it is very close. Secondary, £1,060, here £1,050 so we are about £10, £20 out in most areas, so it is very close. But if there was a larger increase in those qualifying for pupil premium at the moment it would probably go down. That is one of the things we need to look for a solution to. It may not be a problem but if it is let us be proactive in terms of solving that before it does arise, because it is having a positive impact.

Deputy C. Curtis:

Yes. With that Independent School Funding Review, that was one of the headline recommendations, was there anything else particular from that which is still having an impact or still needs addressing, do you think?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

I mentioned the deficit and I will re-emphasise the fact that that deficit, the amount of "investment" or growth funding ... and I have spoken about this a lot, I do not like the term growth funding because I think a lot of that funding was just to deal with the deficit. Real growth funding is extra money to

get on with other areas and improve what we are doing. So I would like to have that conversation again in terms of funding of schools. Now we are at this baseline level and being maintained, what do we want to do in terms of future development, because education is changing all the time and schools have to adapt to that. I think you have probably been in schools as well and you see the range of need that is being dealt with. I am genuinely humbled by what I see happening in schools. We are going to 3 schools this week, the range of students, the range of need, the range of qualification opportunities being made is just quite remarkable.

Deputy C. Curtis:

Yes. Just coming back to that question about the Independent School Funding Review, do you think that you have moved on from that now with the main points, apart from a couple of things you mentioned or is it still very much an active consideration?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

I think there are elements that are still there. I am quite happy to take a comment, if you guys want to, of anything I have missed here.

Programme Director, Education Reform:

Broadly the recommendations numbered about 3 dozen different projects of varying size and scale and they were run as part of a change programme which had a 3-year life from March 2021 through to March 2024. Part of the discipline then is to make sure you close down that timescale. Most things are delivered. So you asked about phases, we are now probably in the embedding and sustaining phase. The Minister made reference to the school funding formula. If you look back you can see considerable progress has been made, if you look forward you can see there is still further refinement needed. These things tend not to stop but they are now managing business as usual as opposed to in that project and change capacity. I guess a couple of big things that we are working on, the Minister has referenced the review of the teachers' terms and conditions, that is something that continues beyond the life of that programme but there might be some other challenges ahead in terms of how we then finalise the delivery of the inclusion review, which was commissioned as part of the programme, delivered in terms of the recommendations as part of the programme but is working its way through at the moment. Those are just some other examples of what has been delivered and what is ahead of us still.

Group Director, Education:

If I can just add, as Jonathan mentioned, certain things that were high profile, like the funding formula, had standing groups of head teachers or experts. That has been normalised in business as usual but other areas ... one of the transformational policy options in the funding review is to focus resource over time more towards the early years and the Minister has made that a significant

priority in the C.S.P. (Common Strategic Policy), which is a big focus now. A very strong part of the Education Reform Programme is properly placed in that remit of Government.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

I make no qualms about it, it is a really challenging area to address because there is a need, there is a lack of provision for all sorts of reasons, including staffing, that facilities are there but not necessarily in the right place or they have the right people in, and we are working incredibly hard ... and I had a very positive meeting, for example, with primary heads the other day who are absolutely on board about helping develop that provision in the longer term.

[15:45]

We have a positive relationship, I believe, with the Jersey Early Years Association. We have stabilised their funding so we know where we are going with that. I think we have a good firm basis to try and move forward. We want to pilot some schemes. I have been a bit pushy in terms of piloting things quicker. The one key thing that is agreed as well is that we have been stuck, I think - and this is talking about early years and nurseries ...

Deputy C. Curtis:

If I can just stop you for a minute.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Because you are going to ask a question there, sorry?

Deputy C. Curtis:

No, I was going to say because we have to focus secondary education today.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Sorry, yes. Okay, fair enough.

Deputy C. Curtis:

So maybe at the quarterly hearing if we can ask you more about early years.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

I am so deeply into it I crack on about it too much.

Deputy C. Curtis:

A couple of questions now about the actual funding formula. You have already answered some of these questions. I was going to ask about the benefits of the formula compared to the average weighted pupil unit but you mentioned about the fluctuations and so on. Are there any drawbacks or challenges as a result of using this formula instead of the average weighted pupil unit?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Yes. One of them is that we have to set ... whenever you set up something that is based upon, if you like, an average point for funding a class, you have to pick a part of the pay scale where you have that average amount that you are funding in terms of staffing. I do not think we ever had that perfect so therefore it is currently set at scale 11, I believe. So if you have a lot of teachers at the top of that scale you could have a lot of your funding ... or if you have teachers over that part of the scale, you may have an issue with the amount of money that you are provided for paying staff because they are above that average that has been set. If you are below that, however, you have an advantage. But there are some benefits that can come from that, which is to increase the range of experience within a school, for example, which is good. It means that also we are working on compensating in those areas if that does happen. That is the sort of fine-tuning we are talking about, which is the best bit to pick, how can we get that to work for us the best we possibly can. It has encouraged perhaps to have some less experienced staff come in so they can gain in the same school as more experienced staff, which is good. It gets that movement and that succession planning, is the phase I am looking for, in schools. It is a 2-sided coin with that formula.

Deputy C. Curtis:

That is good but it maybe needs a bit of refinement?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

It can be a problem. The other thing is as well to get right are the amounts. But I think, again, the A.W.P.U. never dealt with that problem. The A.W.P.U. would not have addressed the range of teaching scales either. In fact it probably would have been much less refined, I would have suggested because it was a very blunt tool per pupil funding.

Deputy C. Curtis:

So you do not see any other drawbacks around the new one?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Anything you want to mention?

Programme Director, Education Reform:

Perhaps just by way example, another area which I think is a challenge that comes with the funding formula, but an appropriate challenge, the Minister has described that part of the new formula points much more funding in a targeted way at children. An example is children with a Record of Need and the idea is to conduct the assessment to fully understand the range and needs that child has, which can be very varied between different children and young people, and then make the appropriate support payment to schools so they can provide the right resources. That is all very sound conceptually. What it creates, though, is a challenge to then run a process which conducts annual reviews, which does it in a timely way, which means that in transition between, let us say, primary and secondary school we can let head teachers know who is about to arrive in September. So there is additional machinery we need to put in place to enable us to continually provide that targeted funding. That is a challenge but, as I say, a challenge that I think is appropriate for us to face.

Deputy C. Curtis:

Because it is more targeted you have more measuring involved?

Programme Director, Education Reform:

Indeed.

Deputy C. Curtis:

Yes, okay.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

I think one positive, though, is that there is now an inclusion component to funding, which funds S.E.N.Cos (Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators), E.N.Cos (Educational Needs Co-ordinators) I think they called, so there is funding specifically for all schools. There is also another level, the gap between children who have special educational needs identified but are not on a Record of Need, but money has also been focused on those areas of Record of Need which are real needs with the school. So it can range between £10,000 and above for funding targeted for a real need for individuals. I think that is a good thing to happen because in the long term we can have an impact.

Deputy C. Curtis:

Are there any elements of the new funding formula that are still in transition? I know that it has been a process, has it not, with bits implemented?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Yes. I think the thing I mentioned about where you hit the point of the funding for staffing ...

Deputy C. Curtis:

So the refinement around that?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

The refinement around that but also, as Jonathan said, I think it is that refinement of the definition, the development of Record of Need and identification, making sure that that is undertaken quickly so that the funds can be in place where they are needed. I think there is some work to do on multilingual learners. We have an increasing number of different languages spoken in schools, which is enriching for our community. We just spoke to 4 students at Hautlieu who talking about how ... I think it was German ... I cannot remember the others, Portuguese, Romanian, Swahili, and it was fascinating to hear them talking about how included they felt and how proud they were. I think it was very good for the school. That work, I think, is really important. It is important as well for people coming to the Island to work that their children also have access to their home language so they have that access to home as well.

Deputy C. Curtis:

That is important, is it not?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

There is some more work to be done there, I think, in terms of the best way to use that money and the best way to do that.

Deputy C. Curtis:

But there is not anything in the plan that is not been implemented yet at all, it is just building on what is there, is it?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

I do not think there is.

Deputy C. Curtis:

No other things in transition?

Programme Director, Education Reform:

I think in terms of the schools that are receiving budget from the school funding formula we have moved into that continual cycle of improvement, which is I am sure the Minister references now in our business as usual. So today the fact we had head teachers, we had central colleagues, we had Treasury colleagues working on what next in terms of opportunities for improvement. But it is more

nuanced than it is core, I would suggest. Perhaps our next phase of work is recognising that we still have some schools that are on the old A.W.P.U. model.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Yes, I was going to mention that actually. In fact, I will say something about that. The fee paying grant funding schools remain on the A.W.P.U. model and they are benchmarked against that A.W.P.U. as it would have been and has continued, partly because of a piece of legislation P.41/2017 which sets the levels at 22 per cent and 47 per cent of the A.W.P.U. as States funding and then the rest comes from fees. So for that to change I believe we may have to change that legislation. What we are doing, we will continue that for 2025 the best that we can, the best fit that we can, and then talk about how that may fit into our new formula model from 2026. They are ongoing discussions and we want to just make sure it works in that format.

Deputy C. Curtis:

So the intention is to bring them into ...

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

If it is the right thing to do then, yes. I will say that quite clearly, if it is the right thing to do. We need to be realistic about that.

Deputy C. Curtis:

Has C.Y.P.E.S. received any feedback about the formula? You have already mentioned about the discussions in the schools and so on but have head teachers told you what they think about the formula and how it is going?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

I have not had direct discussions and asked the question: "What do you think of the formula?" but when we have talked to head teachers, I think they are happier in terms of the level of funding in many ways. They will always ask for more funding, of course, they would; I always would. I think we all would but I think it has brought a bit of stability to funding models so head teachers know where they are. I think there have been positives that have come from it. Again, as we continue to develop the nuances and the subtleties of that we will find where the gaps and will fix them, I would suggest.

Deputy C. Curtis:

You do not have any formal consultation feedback?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

In the meetings we would have.

Programme Director, Education Reform:

We have half-termly structured meetings with a wide group of individuals, including teachers, head teachers in primary and secondary, special schools, central departments under a terms of reference, where the ambition is that a group owns the continuous improvement of the formula and the outputs in terms of proposals for change will feed into Seán as Group Director as part of the normal budget management cycle.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

There is also been some work recently on the completion of Record of Needs and the best way to do that and to speed that process up, which is really important. When the pupil premium was first introduced the notion of how that money would be spent and directed had to be developed. Five or 6 years in I think that is much better now. It does not necessarily have to be spent on any individual, it can be put together to address the needs of a few students or a class of students. I sense that that is being more effectively spent but that is because you get used to what you are doing, I suppose.

Deputy C. Curtis:

Okay. I just want to ask you about the funding deficits and about how this works. The previous 2 Government Plans have sought additional revenue funding for demographic changes and investment in frontline services and C.Y.P.E.S. We were wondering about the process. How is this worked out, that links the funding formula calculations and the requests for additional funding that are sought from the Government Plan processes?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

That additional funding in the previous years was really additional funding to sort out the deficit and to get, I believe, schools back up to a point where they were not running deficits. I have some figures here from 2021 and just about every school was running at a deficit. When that funding was obtained it got schools back to a level where they are functioning not at a deficit - let us put it simply like that. The funding formula then can help maintain that where they are. What we have to do moving forward, I think, is think about what else do we want to do our schools, what else is needed and what else might need to be spent in order to get those developments going. That, I think, will be part of the Government Plan process. This Government Plan is slightly different because of the emphasis that we put on a smaller C.S.P. because we have 2 years of focus - that is where the emphasis on nurseries comes from - but the lifelong learning remit on that will also certainly address schools.

Deputy C. Curtis:

Just to try to understand the process in a bit more depth, I see what you mean about address the deficits before but how is the financial year aligned with the academic year? How does it actually work?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Yes, because we are January to December whereas the academic year is September to ... it has always been a problem in schools that, by the way. It is a problem in the U.K. because their year is from April to April and schools are September to September. Anne, do you want to ... I do not know how we put those 2 together. You effectively know what the funding would be from September to September. Generally we know where we are in December and we know what is needed in the following year. I do not know how to describe that.

Head of Finance Business Partnering:

We now have a smaller proportion of school funding based on the pupil numbers but there is a census of pupils, not only the actual broad numbers but also their needs mix, that runs in the autumn term and the spring term. We take the autumn term census and set the budget for the following calendar year on the autumn census but we retain some money in reserve and make an adjustment as we come into the September term. In that way the financial accounts run January to December but from the school's point of view there is a recognition that their whole landscape changes in September and that is pro-rated. The funding formula itself allocates the available funding in the fairest way based on this concept of what would you have in a model school. It cannot make extra money but what it does is allows us to have a model there. With all the expert advice that we have, the model school would cost 2 per cent or 3 per cent in any one year more than we have available but we can only distribute what we have. It allows us to continue to model what should happen and put that forward in business cases going forward, but it also then allows us to allocate what we get as fairly as possible once we know the outcome. That is how those 2 things come together.

Deputy C. Curtis:

Thank you.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Effectively a bit of money is kept aside for September as a best estimate, which comes from the evidence previously.

Group Director, Education:

As a practical example, you will be aware, as the panel's focus is on secondary school funding, the bulk of children have been going through secondary schools so last academic year one of our schools went up from 7 forms of entry to 8 forms of entry in the September. The autumn census

plans for that increased number for the next calendar year but we have held money back so that we are able to resource the school.

[16:00]

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Yes. That is a good description. Yes, that is clear.

Deputy C. Curtis:

Yes. My last question on this is, do you expect there will be additional revenue bids in the next Government Plan which are linked to the funding formula.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

What we want to do is target them towards one of the C.S.P. priorities which we will have. We want to make sure that we are maintaining where we are in schools and that is working. We do have some stability now. I think it will help that we do have some stability going forward and we know numbers and where we are. But if there are to be bids, they will be towards specific areas of which we have not decided on yet, to be quite frank, apart from the C.S.P. areas. One of the areas will be in the lifelong learning remit and that will include schools and colleges but certainly we had a very good meeting earlier regarding apprenticeships, for example, and we need to look at the way in which we develop those. They are relevant to schools, because that is where students are going or it is where they are starting apprenticeships and the nature of the education they receive so there will be some areas targeted towards that, I believe.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Minister, everyone, I would like to talk to you about the fiscal deficits that you mentioned before. The Independent School Funding Review had found that there was a fiscal deficit, we have already mentioned those, of £2.4 million, of which £2.06 million was attributable to secondary schools. Has the funding formula resolved the problem of the deficits?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

I think the input of money for 2 years solved that problem. Stop me if I am wrong but I believe that is the case. We are now at a point where that deficit was removed and the funding formula I think is more appropriately funding money, so it has resolved the deficit that existed but I do not want to say that it is going to be perfect into the future, because I do not want to give up my possible future aims for more money. That is one reason. Also the funding formula I think is being embedded to see how effective it will be. If we come to a point where we recognise that even with the funding formula, even with the targeting of money that we have deficits start to arise again then we need to

look at it again. I think the key is that with a formula that has got these nuances built in that should be easier to do, because we either address one area of it, say, the average amount of money given to classes, it could be where we position the scale in terms of teaching, it could be in the area of inclusion component, it could be in the area of previous attainment. Because there are these elements of it I think it will be easier to target to find out where the issues are. For example, and it is a really good example, if we find that there are serious areas for those with low prior attainment and we recognise that schools with high levels of low prior attainment are hitting deficits, it may be one of the reasons why and that is what we can target. It should be easier if there is a deficit to solve that deficit with this formula than the rigid A.W.P.U. formula. I hope that we can get to a stage of funding where we do not have deficits and then we start to look at how we can develop and really target to develop the impact of our funding in schools.

The Connétable of Grouville:

We were provided some very good figures in 2022 that still had a deficit across the secondary schools, which is what we are talking about today, of approximately £40,000 but this was spread across a smaller number of schools. What can you tell us about the financial position of secondary schools for the year 2023 and the year to date in 2024? Has that situation changed?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

I believe it has improved. We have figures for 2024-2025. I have got a page here somewhere. There has certainly been an improvement regarding the deficits that existed. Sorry, I have got so many pages here that we have prepared.

The Connétable of Grouville:

I am very impressed with your tab system, by the way.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Yes, I have got to give credit to one of the officers who did this. She did a fantastic job. Your question was about where we are with the deficits. There has absolutely been an improvement. We were seeing deficits in schools. In this year I think there are small deficits in some schools but most are on target, which is a good thing to see. Again, those small deficits will be for specific reasons and it may well be because of a particular intake that year that had greater need, which we can then identify and that is one of the things I am seeing from the funding formula, that it gives us a bit of flexibility and the ability to adapt quickly. They are certainly in a better position than they were, so for example deficits of £266,000 are not appearing this year, which is good.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Did you see any overruns of budget?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

I would say that every single school would say there is no way they would have an overrun of budget. That is just money that they have got allocated for something and I would not be surprised at all. In my experience of being a head of department I would never ever have had an overrun of budget. It would always have been spot on to zero and I would expect that but the figures are very small, £10,000, £11,000 and that may well be due to a purchase that has not arrived yet. That is where the year thing kicks in generally when schools are in from September because they can order in the U.K. and it not be paid and that is about reconciliation at the end of the year.

The Connétable of Grouville:

What the panel would like if it were possible would be to provide us with written details of the year-end finances for the secondary schools for 2023 and the budgets for 2024. It is just that we are now working on 2 year-old figures so it would be good if we had an update.

Head of Finance Business Partnering:

We have got the budget but not the outturn on that, so that was the original thing that we sent out. I will send that to you. So you want outturn 2023 and year-to-date budgets 2024. Secondary schools only?

The Connétable of Grouville:

It would be good to have an up-to-date for our review.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

The year to date budget for 2024 remember September is a significantly expensive time going up to December.

Head of Finance Business Partnering:

Yes, we profile there to be more budget available in the autumn term because that is when schools are getting to grips with their new cohort.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Also the term is longer. There are more days spent and they are not equal terms frequently.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Thank you for pointing that out. The Independent School Funding Review described the double funding of key stage 4 and it suggested a policy adoption of consolidating academic selection at age 16. Can you describe any work that has been done to review that policy option?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

I have not inherited work that has been undertaken on that. It was looked at and I think considered to be not something that would be discussed at the moment. I think it is something that we do need to address. I think the world is changing. Our academic need is changing. The need for provision post-16 to be more joined up is changing but the way to do this is to not get into the issue of sudden change for the sake of it and all the controversy around that but to have an intelligent, reasoned look at where we are and bring the schools on board to ask what is the best way forward. Yes, I think the Independent School Funding Review referred to 14-plus costing £700,000 or £1 million a year because of the double funding. The problem we have got is that if you do not double fund and there is a lot of student change it can have significant effects on the budget of a school and that limits the courses available. The school funding formula might address that a little bit if there were small numbers transferring but those numbers fluctuate each year for a myriad of reasons. I think that is a discussion that at some point needs to be had, that difficult discussion, as to what we want to do, but any change I think will take a few years to embed.

Head of Finance Business Partnering:

I think where we are, Minister, if I may, is that the funding formula has stabilised the negative impact on the 11-16 schools. There is policy work that needs to be done in the next term, because it is not the Minister's priority in this term to see if we could make the system more efficient. Where we are is it is no longer destabilising Le Rocquier and Grainville, et cetera, because the funding formula has meant that the amount of money that moves with the student who moves to Hautlieu is much smaller and is based on a whole class worth rather than an individual person.

The Connétable of Grouville:

This is a very important part of our review and this is the sort of drill down that we will need. What is your assessment of the double funding of key stage 4?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

It was necessary for schools when we had the A.W.P.U. certainly otherwise it would have had a detrimental effect for 11-16 schools. The funding formula that has been suggested has helped with that a lot but I think we need to maintain whatever is necessary so that those schools are not affected by that transfer. There are a lot of students who remain in 11-16 schools who are incredibly successful and who are working really hard and who need the range of curricula that is offered elsewhere and they are offering that and those schools are very proud to do that, and quite rightly. They are excellent 11-16 schools.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Do the Government have any plans to review or change the system of selection at 14 plus or for Jersey students at provided schools in the future?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

We have got 2 years and in those 2 years we have some priorities that are really important in terms of nurseries, lifelong learning and the embedding of school meals, et cetera. I would like to start the dialogue before the next election and I think it is important to start the dialogue because we are in a changing world. I think people recognise that if we are genuinely going to train for our Island, if we are going to provide the range of qualifications that now exist elsewhere, we have to be more flexible in what we do and whether the transfer at 14 or not is the best way to do that is something that we need to get an agreed position on across the Island. I know it is a controversial topic for many because it is traditionally what we do but education does change over time. Look at the qualifications that are coming through. There has just been a change of government in the U.K. which may affect whether or not B.Techs exist still. It was being lost. It may well not be now. T-levels may not exist; they have not had a good press recently in the last few days, so it is a really changing environment in our education system and our qualifications. We cannot just sit still and ignore it. We need to look at that and have that discussion.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Are you aware of any other jurisdictions in the world that have the 14 plus transfer?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Some in Northern Ireland used to have it. I do not know if they still have it. For 14 I am not sure at all.

Group Director, Education:

There is an academic selective system, not necessarily age 14.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

In Northern Ireland?

The Connétable of Grouville:

Because as I said our review is that very important ...

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

I believe it is quite a unique Jersey thing. Part of it as well and this is a context I think people need to step back and look at dispassionately, it used to be the stage that at 14 you went on and did G.C.S.E. (General Certificate of Secondary Education) and that was it. Many schools start G.C.S.E.

preparation in year 9 now. They start that exposure to exams in year 9. They may have their English finished, for example, by the end of year 10 to give them a greater range of qualification that they can access so that they can have greater access to post-16 education and level 3 education, which is great. It is giving our students more flexibility. Whether the rigid model of transferring at 14 will fit for ever we do not know. Many schools do start in year 9 now and those are the types of things we are going to have to look back at and ask what works. What we need to do is to ensure that we raise the standard of all of our schools and we also provide for those who struggle at school and that is one of the things we are trying to do in terms of, for example, priority of trying to develop La Passerelle Secondary School, which is much needed. There are a whole number of pieces to the jigsaw but we need to dispassionately at some time sit back and have an intelligent informed debate on this and come to some conclusions. Not everyone will be happy but I think the outcomes could be really good for our young people.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Have the Government or department any evidence to assess whether this system of selection is the optimum way to structure secondary education?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

I do not think we have that evidence, no.

Group Director, Education:

There has not been detailed focus work under the Ministers recently or currently on this area but as well as recommending the consolidation of selection at 16 rather than at 14-16 the Independent Funding Review also urged the department to have a root and branch review of inclusion. We conducted that; we have reported to the Scrutiny Panel on the findings of the Nasen report that was published in December 2021 and that shone a light on selection across the system and gave us quite a detailed evidence base. As well as selection at 14 that is academic Jersey has selection at 5, 7, 11, 14, 16, it has selection by gender, by ability to pay, by faith, as well as academic ability. We have got some of the research evidence as a policy consideration that has not come up yet.

[16:15]

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

I think what you have summed up there is exactly the pieces of the jigsaw that we are talking about and in order to come up with any change in any addressing of whether or not it is successful we do need to step back and have, as I have said before, a really intelligent look at where we are. If you make it evidence-based, and I agree we do need that evidence, that becomes a much easier thing to do if we do want change. Many choose not to transfer at 14. They are happy in the school that

they are in; they are succeeding and they have got their friends there. Others may want to leave for different reasons. We need to address all of those issues before we move forward and we need to look at the implications of any change for all of our school community. I agree with what Seán has said there about the inclusion model. That needs to be working. We need to get that right. Inclusion does not mean that everyone just goes to school where they are told to go even if there is not a provision there. We need to make sure there is provision there.

The Connétable of Grouville:

How significant a factor do you think is the history and past context of secondary education?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

There is no denying there is a history and there is a lot of tradition in our school system, both in terms of the schools themselves, in terms of the selection process, in terms of the way that we see schools. Parents do things in a particular way and they want their children to do the same thing. What is changing though is the context in which their children are learning and the world in which they are living, be it the digital world, be it the needs of the Island, be it the skills that they need and the ever-changing skills that they need. As adults we are constantly pushed to change our skills, and we have career changes throughout our life and that will happen. Whether that tradition fits is one of the questions we need to ask.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Indeed.

Deputy B.B. de S.DV.M. Porée:

Minister, with reference to the introduction in 2023 of specific inclusion funding through the Jersey Funding Formula, could you detail what this money provides in a secondary school?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Yes, I can. Are you talking about the inclusion component?

Deputy B.B. de S.DV.M. Porée:

Yes.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

I mentioned this before about that it would be nice to talk about this so it is in its own little area. It includes resourcing for special educational needs co-ordinators, educational needs co-ordinators, and those types of areas. It also includes counsellors in every school; in primary schools it is a part-time counsellor and in secondary schools it will be a full-time counsellor. Areas of student well-

being, responsibility points to co-ordinate well-being. In fact I was at Hautlieu School just before this hearing. We spoke to the panel there that was the well-being panel that had been facilitated by a member of staff and I will give them a shout out. They were absolutely fantastic and the work they were doing in their school was really good. This is in very small print, so it is not going to help me, but I do not know it off the top of my head. It is perhaps to do with age; I do not know. Also it is the gap between special educational needs and R.o.N. (Record of Need) so there is a per pupil funding for S.E.N. and then I think the really important thing that has happened, Deputy, regarding the funding is around the Record of Need. I think what has happened before is there was increased funding but it was not significantly increased so you had a scale of need. Some could be really quite significant and it sounds clinical and I do not mean it this way but it is very expensive to provide that need. We should be providing that need, do not get me wrong, it is the right thing to do, but the Record of Need process recognises that. What is the maximum amount for a Record of Need that could be paid? Around £25,000?

Group Director, Education:

It is very high. I would need to look it up.

Head of Finance Business Partnering:

It is £36,000.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

So £36,000. That is a significant area of funding to enable the child to access education. That is a huge change in terms of educational needs. There is also the ...

Group Director, Education:

If it is helpful, Minister, that is for band G, the highest band but there is a band H that says for unique needs of an individual pupil to fully incorporate them in a school there would be bespoke funding that does not have a limit.

Deputy C. Curtis:

That would be for very few children, I suppose, would it not?

Group Director, Education:

It would be very few. There would be very few pupils in those bands.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

I think though it is really important to recognise that it may be very few but it is being recognised so those few children perhaps before would not have access to education. Perhaps now they can

because it has been recognised in the funding and that is quite important. There is also Jersey Premium. There is the lower prior attainment money that I have talked about before as well. I think I have covered everything now.

Deputy B.B. de S.DV.M. Porée:

Thank you, Minister. So would you think it is fair to say that the inclusion budget includes funding for all staff training about additional needs to students or would this be met from a separate training budget?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

I think it is a combination of both. I think the S.E.N.Cos for example receive training and then would use that in order to upskill staff. Whether that is the most successful approach I do not know.

Group Director, Education:

The Minister is absolutely right. The Education Reform Programme had a discrete C.P.D. (Continuing Professional Development) line of significant resource, a 7-figure sum recurring so as well as money as your question rightly asks in the inclusion budget for the dedicated roles the Minister talked to of S.E.N.Cos, of emotional literacy support assistants, of D.S.L.s (Designated Safeguarding Lead) and the like we have been able to run Master's degree qualifications. We have just had the third cohort of S.E.N.Cos, all the S.E.N.Cos in the Island irrespective of school type, they will all be meeting the needs of Jersey children with need. So we have been able to fund those well and having trained all the S.E.N.Cos in the Island that is now moving to a formally recognised national professional qualification and it will be recurring for any new entries.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

I think it is a really good question that you asked because I think there is a need to recognise that the training that is required for ongoing professional development for staff in these areas must be satisfied because day-to-day work in those areas is vital if we are going to enable staff to be equipped with the skills that they need.

Deputy B.B. de S.DV.M. Porée:

Thank you, Minister. On that note can I ask you if you can please clarify whether all the staff in the school would receive inclusion training or training about how to interact with individuals with additional needs such as O.T. (Occupational Therapy) or A.D.H.D. (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder) or would it be that that training would only be offered to specialist and specific staff?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

In a strange way it is a combination of both. Mainly the specific staff that we talk about would certainly need to receive that training. I would want and hope that there are wider areas of training for staff in terms of, for example, autism and specific areas that come up. I would not say that all staff are trained to a level of a S.E.N.Co. That would be really difficult. However, I think that is exactly the type of ongoing professional development that would be required. If you look at models around the world and we always talk about Finland but they do massively train their staff and all of them are very highly qualified, but they also pay a lot more tax than we do and put a lot more funds into their education system. I am quite happy to take a lot more funds in order to enable that happening.

Deputy C. Curtis:

This is something that has been brought to us by parents who are saying that the specially qualified teachers, S.E.N.Cos really know about this but there are other teachers in the school who are treating their child as badly behaved and so on because they think they do not know about ...

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

I think there is a role of the S.E.N.Co to increase that understanding.

Deputy C. Curtis:

All the staff do not get training at the moment, though?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

No, not formal training directly, no. To be quite frank, it depends what you mean by training. If it is about identification I think what staff will do or should be doing is using the resources that are there within the school, those who have been trained, to say: "Look, if this is not the way to do this then let us model the way it is and learn as well."

Deputy C. Curtis:

I suppose what I was thinking of is like in the care sector, for example, every member of staff gets training about different conditions and so on and some of course get a lot more training, but they all get training.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Ideally, yes. You have got to remember as well that sometimes if you teach 5 classes a day of 25 students that is 125 students you see every day. You could see 800 students in a week and there are many different areas there, so I think it is a question of amassing training as you go. We have specialist S.E.N.Cos who are there to co-ordinate and there to ensure that within a school the best practice is happening where it can be. It does not mean it is always going to be got right and we

have got to recognise that sometimes it will not be perfect but they are learning and that can then improve but they do have a specialist role in ensuring that happens in schools. That is what they are there for.

Deputy B.B. de S.DV.M. Porée:

So it is fair to say that the budget for training is being used primarily to specialised staff who have direct interaction.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

In terms of inclusion training, yes. Remember there is a wider training need as well, updates to the curriculum, updates to processes and so on.

Deputy B.B. de S.DV.M. Porée:

Minister, has the element of inclusion-based funding been altered since it was introduced in 2023?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Do you mean the amount?

Deputy B.B. de S.DV.M. Porée:

Yes.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Since it was introduced in 2023, I think only by inflation.

Programme Director, Education Reform:

There have been some inflationary impacts linked to pay awards. That would be nil though in terms of impact on budget because the costs go up by a commensurate amount. There have been some changes to the underlying level of funding for different levels of Record of Need, as the Minister expressed. We also look at the change in context of a school; that is a need profile, so if we have some schools that have got increasing needs, and we have 2 or 3 examples of schools that have new additional resource provisions, they would then get an increase in their budget to provide for that. Those examples are part of that continuous improvement of the funding formula or in this case the inclusion component of the funding formula.

Deputy B.B. de S.DV.M. Porée:

So it is changing?

Programme Director, Education Reform:

Yes, changing and increasing in most parts.

Head of Finance Business Partnering:

In the 2024 Government Plan the line that you mentioned earlier that says funding for various priorities, £1 million of that went to inclusion generally but primarily into La Sente and La Passerelle which provide specialist places. Some of them are secondary and still does not quite cover it, but what that does is that it allows secondary school pupils to have some very intense and specialist input in those specialist environments and some of them go back and some of them remain, so that is where the big additional money went in 2024.

Deputy B.B. de S.DV.M. Porée:

So it is constantly being adjusted to provide for the needs.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Yes.

Deputy B.B. de S.DV.M. Porée:

The funding formula presently is not applicable to fee-paying secondary schools such as Victoria College and Jersey College. Please can you outline the reasons why the same formula cannot be applied to those schools?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

As I mentioned before partly because of P.41/2017 which sets the amount that is given to the fee-paying schools as part of A.W.P.U. so they would need to move away from the A.W.P.U. formulae in order to change that. Whether they want to do that is another question, so we would have to change that. The reason it has been maintained as it is is because the complexity of changing that to the school funding formula and then working out what percentage of that would go, if that is possible, has been very difficult and I think we need to embed the funding formula first. Those discussions will happen. The other thing you need to remember is that the funding formula recognises greater need so some schools, for example, would have a significant number of students with special educational needs or on R.o.N.s. That may be or may not be ... and we would need to look very carefully at the fee-paying schools as to whether that would be beneficial to them or not because some of that funding would not go that way and others might. However, there has been money given for S.E.N.Cos for those schools so they have been including some of the inclusion money in addition to the A.W.P.U. and I am confident that the amount of money given is kept at the percentages on P.41 over the last few years.

Deputy B.B. de S.DV.M. Porée:

Thank you, Minister. Forgive me if you have already mentioned the answer to the question I am going to ask. Could you specifically tell us what is the long-term plan for calculating the funding for the fee-paying schools?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

The long-term plan is for next year to continue with the A.W.P.U. as we are and then as we head towards 2026 there needs to be formal discussion as to the best way. It may be that we will continue the A.W.P.U. for another year after that as the other things are developed, which may be a sensible thing to do. I think in schools you need to know what the funding is for 2 years and you can work it out. If you have only got a year and then there is a sudden change I think it could be difficult but we have to see how we go. Those discussions need to happen and we need to model what the change would look like for those schools and where they are. That is the same for the fee-paying schools and the grant-funded schools.

[16:30]

Deputy B.B. de S.DV.M. Porée:

Do fee-paying schools receive any additional funding for inclusion support for students?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

They do for a S.E.N.Co I believe but because the numbers accessing S.E.N.Co may be lower it may be that they have to share a S.E.N.Co between 2 schools. I believe that is the case in terms of funding. They do in those terms, yes.

Deputy B.B. de S.DV.M. Porée:

What are the specific differences between those fundings?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

What do you mean, sorry?

Deputy B.B. de S.DV.M. Porée:

In terms of the funding provided for inclusion support to students you did mention the S.E.N.Co does get additional funding.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

That is a general piece of funding so they can employ a S.E.N.Co for their school so they have got a specific role regarding special educational needs. Is that correct, Jonathan?

Programme Director, Education Reform:

Yes, there are other components, so for example if a child with a Record of Need is attending one of those schools the school will receive 100 per cent of the base and the top-up funding but we have also been in the position to remove some longstanding charges which have been quite significant and then requested that the head teacher take that additional disposable income and invest that in furtherance of their inclusion in school.

Deputy B.B. de S.DV.M. Porée:

So these are the specific differences?

Programme Director, Education Reform:

Those are the specific additions but, as the Minister rightly points out, the potential change would come from adopting something that looked more like the standard formula which is part of our 2026 discussions.

Deputy C. Curtis:

Those longstanding charges that you have mentioned that are removed, is that about charges for using some of the facilities?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Yes, it is an occupancy charge.

Deputy C. Curtis:

Okay, I thought so.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

The occupancy charge was removed and so therefore that money is available for them to spend on their special needs provision. I am being very careful as to the way I word this because I am not saying that children at the fee-paying schools do not have additional needs. They will do, because every child ...

Deputy C. Curtis:

I suspect it is probably just the same as anywhere else really but certainly for autism. Just asking about the S.E.N.Co again is there only provision for one between 2 schools? Is that right?

Programme Director, Education Reform:

I would need to doublecheck the detail. I think we provide funding for a S.E.N.Co using the A.W.P.U. methodology still, so that 47 per cent or 22 per cent for all schools.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

I think it would be interesting to see how many students would meet that S.E.N. criteria in those schools and I think we do have some data on that and it is significantly lower.

Deputy B.B. de S.DV.M. Porée:

It would be good to pass that on if you can. The funding provided by Government to J.C.G. (Jersey College for Girls) and Victoria College was reduced in 2022 and 2023. Is there sufficient transparency about how the fee-paying schools are funded and supported by Government?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Yes, I believe there is. It does reach the 22 per cent and 47 per cent. I will say as well that there is a proportion of money given to the fee-paying schools but per pupil and the amount of money that is available per student in those schools is higher than the non-fee-paying schools still and I suppose that is what parents pay for, so I am confident that they reach the percentages that P.41 suggests of 22 per cent and 47 per cent of the A.W.P.U. and that has not changed and we are still there. What will happen if we change the formula will have to be discussed and we will have to know precisely what the impact of that is but there will need to be clarity everywhere regarding that and it needs to be understood by the schools, by the department and by the boards of governors, for example, so that we can have positive discussions about where we are with funding and know precisely what that means for those schools.

Head of Finance Business Partnering:

The absolute funding, the pound funding, has gone up every year. Do you want me to send that to you as well?

Deputy B.B. de S.DV.M. Porée:

That would be good.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

We will send that. I think it is important that that is understood.

Deputy B.B. de S.DV.M. Porée:

Can you please clarify where the fee-paying schools have different arrangements than provided for schools, say, for facilities, for example the use of the Langford Sports Centre?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

You would have to talk about specific schools there. That is a really difficult question to answer, I have got to say, in terms of the different arrangements. They have access to facilities in the same way. It depends on the school if we talk about which of the fee-paying schools. So J.C.G. for example would have access to Langford. I do not know how to answer that question, to be honest. Just put that question again and I will see if I can find an answer in my head.

Deputy B.B. de S.DV.M. Porée:

Yes, okay. Can you clarify whether fee-paying schools have different arrangements to the ones provided to schools for facilities use charges, for example the use of Langford Sports Centre?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

I think we will have to put something together there because there is a lot of information there, depending on the school, depending on the facility, depending on the timings and if you want the comparison to the non-fee-paying schools that is equally as complex. Hautlieu has a sports facility available, so does J.C.G., so does Victoria. It has its playing fields and so on. Beaulieu certainly has a sports centre. De La Salle I think uses the same one. It is a really complex answer.

Group Director, Education:

It is and it would be important to acknowledge Langford as a sports centre does not exist within the C.Y.P.E.S. estate. There are charges in the same way that some schools might use the AquaSplash for swimming lessons. It would be chargeable. Haute Vallee is the only provided school with a swimming pool on its site and there are charging arrangements internally for example for the astroturf pitches. There is a mixed arrangement around the whole school estate. Sometimes we own the sports facilities and sometimes we do not.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

I think we do need to send you information.

Deputy B.B. de S.DV.M. Porée:

Yes, if we were to send you the question would you elaborate on it a bit more and be specific?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Yes, I think we would need to, because that is going to be quite a few pages of documentation in answer to that. I do not think I am going to be able to answer that today, to be quite frank.

Deputy B.B. de S.DV.M. Porée:

Thank you. How much information about funding is provided to families who are considering one of the fee-paying schools?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

In terms of funding that comes from Government, that is what is in the public domain. In terms of the fees they would be published to the parents. In terms of what that means in comparison then there would not be anything published. One of the fee-paying schools would not be saying to a parent: "We are funded 150 per cent per student as to what would be elsewhere." I do not think that discussion ever happens. I do not think it is transparent in terms of those sums and I do not think they want it to be. I think it is more about what the school provides and so on. I do not think their funding formula really comes into the choice of whether the parent would go there. I do not know. That is more statistics that we can give you in terms of where we know that they are, in terms of the money that they receive from Government and the money they take in fees. We do control fee rises, for example, we do limit fee rises. It has to be signed off by myself and they would usually be limited to inflation.

Deputy B.B. de S.DV.M. Porée:

Thank you, Minister. There are significant financial grants given to Beaulieu and De La Salle secondary schools. Is it correct that the amount of funding given is based on the A.W.P.U. formula?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Yes, it is. That remains the same as well. That is again another discussion that we would need to have in terms of grant-maintained schools. I have got to say that what we have done with our funding I think over the years of the different types of school has been developed in parts and I think there is a time when we do need to have those discussions about effective and consistent ways to undertake that funding but, yes, it is linked to the A.W.P.U.

Deputy B.B. de S.DV.M. Porée:

Can you describe any differences to how the funding is calculated in comparison for instance with J.C.G. and Victoria College?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Not really. I think it is similar.

Head of Finance Business Partnering:

The running costs are done in exactly the same way. The secondary school is 47 per cent of A.W.P.U. and we have maintained that so that formula produces the same answer for J.C.G. as Beaulieu and is exactly the same.

Deputy B.B. de S.DV.M. Porée:

Why is that particular formula, the 47 per cent, the more suitable calculation?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

That is what was decided by the States Assembly.

Head of Finance Business Partnering:

That was exactly what was decided in P.41/2017 so we have obviously been looking at its suitability but we have not got to focus on that yet. The Minister was saying that is looking like a 2026 focus but it has been the same and before that it was 50 per cent and that was also prescribed by the States in a proposition some years back, I cannot remember which one. I would have to look for that.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

I cannot remember who brought the change but it was brought in 2017.

Head of Finance Business Partnering:

Yes, but what I would say is that the private schools effectively that we give a grant to on the same basis also have to raise sufficient fees for their buildings, whereas Property Holdings looks after J.C.G. and Victoria in the same way as it would look after any other States building.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

So the difference is not in the payments that we give them. It is what they are paying for when they receive those and the services they provide as well. They are different but that is partly because they have a different structure in terms of their ... "autonomy" is probably the wrong word.

Deputy B.B. de S.DV.M. Porée:

They own their own buildings.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Yes.

Head of Finance Business Partnering:

They are completely independent.

Group Director, Education:

They are responsible for I.T. (Information Technology), structure, buildings, premises, facilities, management.

Deputy B.B. de S.DV.M. Porée:

Okay, thank you. We understand that the grant-aided schools received funding for students with Records of Need. Is that correct and, if so, is it included in their total grant or is it provided for separately?

Head of Finance Business Partnering:

Separately.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Yes, it is separately. I was going to say I would doublecheck that but I am pretty certain it is separately. I think that is the inclusion piece, that element. Whenever a child goes to De La Salle, Beaulieu, J.C.G., Les Quennevais, whatever, if they have a Record of Need that needs to be met and I think that is important.

Deputy B.B. de S.DV.M. Porée:

That is good information.

Head of Finance Business Partnering:

The R.o.N. top-up follows the child. The base funding is in the formula, whichever formula we are talking about.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Can I just re-emphasise that? That is a really important point, the R.o.N. top-up follows the child. Other S.E.N. funding or any base funding that is included is more generic and so that is why that funding will be received by those schools, just to emphasise that.

Deputy B.B. de S.DV.M. Porée:

So wherever the student will be that support will be there?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Yes. Sorry to interrupt you there.

Deputy B.B. de S.DV.M. Porée:

It is important for the general public to know. Thank you. What is the long-term plan for calculating the Government funding provided for the grant-aided schools?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

The long-term plan is to have that discussion as to how the funding formula might fit with the fee-paying and grant-aided schools and what will come from those discussions will determine the outcomes. I do not want to avoid an answer on that but simply we do not have one yet because we have to have those discussions and there is an enormous amount to consider in that discussion as to the effect it will have on funding because of the targeting of funding towards more identified need. We have to think carefully about the way that is going to work in the long term. That is where we are. The discussions will probably be started, I would imagine, next year but the first implication of any change will not be until 2026. I do not think it would be sensible to make rapid change before then.

Deputy C. Curtis:

I just wanted to clarify something about the inclusion funding which you said was for the S.E.N. counsellors and so on. Is it all staffing or does that cover any facilities? I know you mentioned some training as well. Is it staffing and training or anything else like equipment or facilities?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

I do not know if it is equipment. I do not think it is.

Programme Director, Education Reform:

It covers a range of things. The bulk of the funding is typically invested in staff, many of whom are teaching assistants and we are hugely grateful to the large number of teaching assistants both with us now and who have joined us recently, in that that has enabled our investment to result in more support for children with additional need. A smaller amount does go into some other small changes to premises to accommodate and support children attending the school and also a small amount goes into some resources. For example we work with the speech and language therapy teams who access and provide support in our schools. There are alternative communication devices that children who might need additional support for their communication can access and it tends to vary based on the need. It might be that some of that Record of Need funding might be around a device or some software on a device or it might be that the bulk of it is around that teaching assistant support to enable that child to use that device and access the curriculum.

[16:45]

Deputy C. Curtis:

Okay, so it is mainly staffing but it can be used for some facilities and so on. Great. Minister, can you please tell us about the role of head teachers in the governance of secondary school budgets?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Head teachers have autonomy to control their budget when it is allocated to them and they make the decisions on staffing and where that money is going to be allocated. They have a responsibility to balance the budget as budget holders, as anyone who is a budget holder would have. Effectively they take the money and will determine its spend. You have to remember that the vast majority of money is on staff.

Deputy C. Curtis:

Yes. There is a set number of deputy heads and so on, so they do not have say over that, do they?

Head of Finance Business Partnering:

They do. There is a model school determined by this group that has now gone into B.A.U. (Business As Usual), as we were discussing earlier, that says that a model school that is this size and shape would have this number of staff, deputies and so on, but that just creates a cash limit. Having created the cash limit for the model school that is handed to the head teacher and they may do something different with it.

Deputy C. Curtis:

So they really do have autonomy about how it is spent once they have got the funding?

Head of Finance Business Partnering:

Within a limit, yes.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

That has developed over time so a head teacher theoretically could say: "I do not need that many deputy heads. I would rather employ a main scale teacher and a teaching assistant because I can target a particular group." To some extent that is necessary because of the different nature of schools and a head teacher has to react to the cohort that they have in school. It also depends on which teachers can be recruited to deliver the curriculum. Some subjects may not be able to be delivered because you simply cannot find a teacher to deliver that course so the head teachers have to have some form of autonomy. There is governance over that, though, and there are regular reviews as to where budgets are and a head teacher would be expected to flag up any issues as they go and that communication does happen so that big issues do not arise at the end, or they should not.

Group Director, Education:

If it is helpful to the Minister and the Chair, the 2 main planks of governance are for each of our secondary schools there is a governing body with responsibilities in the Education (Jersey) Law and each has its own finance subcommittee. It might be finance resources or finance staffing; it is for

them to organise but it has oversight. Then the other level of governance is departmental so every single month we meet as senior officers, Anne and her team, Jonathan and myself, the senior adviser team who will meet and look line-by-line at the whole education budget, internal and each school, and conversations are had to support where a secondary school, for example, may have had some residential time and some more experienced teachers leave, less experienced teachers coming in. There is more latitude and they will get professional advice on how that is best spent. As the Minister said the head teacher is the lead for their budget.

Deputy C. Curtis:

That is interesting. Does that also include a photocopier or something? Can they also make their decisions about what they spend money on for the facilities needed in the school?

Programme Director, Education Reform:

Yes.

Deputy C. Curtis:

So that is still their choice?

Group Director, Education:

Adaptation facilities need the permission of the landlord, Jersey Property Holdings, so we have encouraged head teachers to make sure that those plans of physical adaptations are run past the landlord to make sure that those things run smoothly and for access and the like. A head teacher will have a different view on which I.T. technology, whether iPads or Chromebooks or whichever model.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Photocopying is always a controversial subject in schools and every single business. Honestly, it was probably the biggest cause of contention in a school past anything else and it is funny that you picked up on photocopying. That made me smile.

Deputy C. Curtis:

We have heard this.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Yes, absolutely.

Head of Finance Business Partnering:

Outside of C.Y.P.E.S. constraints there are occasionally government-wide initiatives and if you go back to I am going to say 2015, 2016, there was a government-wide initiative run by the Strategic Procurement function that is currently a subset of the Treasury and Exchequer but was not at the time, and a contract was let for all photocopiers.

The Connétable of Grouville:

We have heard about this.

Head of Finance Business Partnering:

Everywhere, printers.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

I have to declare an interest. I was working on that so I have a very distinct view on it.

Deputy B.B. de S.DV.M. Porée:

That has not made many schools happy.

Head of Finance Business Partnering:

It did not make friends at the time and most things settle over time and this one clearly has not.

Deputy C. Curtis:

Okay, but apart from photocopiers there is quite a lot of autonomy?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Yes, absolutely.

Head of Finance Business Partnering:

It is a trigger for anxiety.

Programme Director, Education Reform:

Just a couple of clarifying points on this. There is significant discretion however, as has been expressed, head teachers have an obligation to deliver a balanced budget so it is discretion within and there are also some things that are set where there is not discretion. There may be some safeguarding roles that all schools must have, so some of the funding must make sure that is discharged. There may be some core inclusion roles. Money that is for a Record of Need for a child must be invested for the benefit of that child. There are some things in there that have a degree of constraint but to expand on the Record of Need it might be that head teacher works with their inclusion colleague and they decide what is best for that child, so even within a set constrained

element which is that R.o.N. funding must be for the child with a R.o.N., how that is spent is still subject to that head teacher or that staff discretion. It is graduated levels of discretion but lots of autonomy still with head teachers.

Deputy C. Curtis:

Yes. I am going to have to skip a load of questions in a minute but just to come back to that, it was the Nasen *Independent Review of Inclusive Education* which recommended particularly that head teachers be given more autonomy on how the budget is spent, so you think that has been done, clearly?

Group Director, Education:

I think it is a journey for head teachers. As recently as yesterday where the Minister met with all primary heads, a meeting with secondary heads yesterday, the ambition as educators looking at other systems would be, for example, to have 3-year budgets so you could better plan, you could accrue savings for bigger projects. At the moment as provided Government schools we are working within the published parameters of the Public Finance Manual which is quite right, the duty to balance a budget annually, for example. The idea of autonomy over budget is a continuum and we are at a certain point.

Deputy B.B. de S.DV.M. Porée:

That has been suggested, a larger amount of time so they can have more control of their budget in the long term.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Yes, that would need careful governance and guidance because we are asking head teachers to become significant business managers then and I think they would need some help and support in doing that.

Head of Finance Business Partnering:

It is not allowed by the law at the moment. The Public Finances (Jersey) Law was amended in 2019 and you have annual budgets. Schools have annual budgets, I. and E. (Infrastructure and Environment) have annual budgets, the health service has annual budgets, we have annual budgets, so I understand their desire ...

The Connétable of Grouville:

I think the acquisition of photocopiers would trash your budget completely, according to teachers.

Deputy B.B. de S.DV.M. Porée:

The change is desirable but the law is what you are citing now.

Head of Finance Business Partnering:

Yes. It affects everybody or nobody. It cannot opt out of compliance with the law.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

I think there are ways in which we can develop that.

Deputy C. Curtis:

We did have a huge amount of questions and we have not got much time left. We had too many questions so we will have to send them on to you as written. If I skip to a couple towards the end, Minister, do you have any views on the choice of secondary schools available in Jersey? For example, for some students there is no choice of school unless they have a level of academic ability or the family is able to pay fees.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Yes. It is difficult because we do have a very selective system and as I mentioned earlier we need to have an intelligent, dispassionate conversation around whether that is what we want to continue to have, because for every winner there will be somebody who is perhaps not a winner in that situation. However, the other thing that we do need to do is to ensure that our non-selective 11-16 schools are of high quality and I know that staff are working incredibly hard to do that and our children are extremely successful in these schools. They achieve huge amounts. I am at Grainville tomorrow, I was at Hautlieu today, we have been to Haute Vallee, Le Rocquier and Les Quennevais. I have been massively impressed by the young people who are in those schools and we have had really great conversations with them and they are doing extremely well. It may not be a choice, I understand what you mean by that, but I would say that I think our 11-16 schools are providing excellent education. We can always do more; we can always do better and they need support. I think we need to put more support in for those young people who are not accessing school and we are planning to do that with La Passerelle Secondary School. I am really pushing for that and, touch wood, if we can come up with some good news for you later in the year that would be really nice for us to be able to do. Yes, I understand that. In terms of the selective system it has developed over time. It has been here a long time. Is it the best way to do things? My genuine answer is I do not know. We need to think really carefully about what we want in terms of overall and then look very carefully to see where we are but we do not want to destroy something that is successful anywhere. That does not help anybody.

Deputy C. Curtis:

Minister, what is your opinion of how Jersey provides funding for its education and secondary schools in comparison to other jurisdictions?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

That is a really good question. There are comparisons that can be made through the fantastically well thought through proposition to provide a classification of functions of government, a recognition of our funding of schools compared to other comparators. I do not know which wonderful Deputy brought that to the Assembly but that gives us a comparison. It depends where you look. If we look at places such as Finland we will not compare well because they spend an awful lot more. In terms of the U.K., I think we compare reasonably well but I think we need to look specifically at Jersey because we are such a small jurisdiction. We are the size effectively of one largeish educational authority in the U.K. and it might be worth us looking there, but we also within that have a very selective system, distinct communities, distinct issues around inequality in some areas, we have distinct areas of educational need. I think funding has improved but I think the funding improvement, rather than being growth, was levelling. I do not want to say levelling up because that is banned now, which is good, but it was a levelling process and we need to as we look forward think very carefully about what we want to do with education. I would say what I have said in the Assembly and I say all the time, we have banned the word "cost" in C.Y.P.E.S. Whenever we talk about education we talk about it as investment because I genuinely believe that is what it is.

Deputy C. Curtis:

Do you think maybe that investment should be considered as a higher investment?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

I would always say that. As Minister for Education if I did not sit here and say that I think we need more money then I would not be fulfilling my role as Minister for Education but I think that is because we can use that money to really get outcomes. Day in, day out, in schools they deliver services and education in sometimes really difficult circumstances. How many students go to school every day?

Group Director, Education:

It is 15,000 or 16,000.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Yes, 15,000 or 16,000 young people every day. That cannot be under-estimated in the work that is going on. Staff do that every day, day in, day out. I want to support them in every single way that we can to do that work the most effectively that we can so that the outcomes for our young people are the most effective. They are paying our pensions, remember, in the long term. That is a really important thing. Young people are the future of this Island and education is the basis for that future.

In terms of direct comparisons it would be interesting for us to look at that and if we can produce something we will get that to you for your review. I understand this is about your review so we want to help as much as we possibly can.

Head of Finance Business Partnering:

It was done in the Independent School Funding Review on 2019 data and there is a whole purchasing power parity table and from memory we were just under mid-table at that time but that is 5 years ago.

Deputy C. Curtis:

That is a few years ago now.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

There is a recent look from the classifications of functions of government thing as well but in a small Island that should work. We will find that document for you. There was something published recently.

Deputy C. Curtis:

So you would be able to look at that again.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Yes. I just cannot remember the figure off the top of my head. I apologise.

The Connétable of Grouville:

It would be interesting to see a comparator with Guernsey, the Isle of Man, and other jurisdictions of a similar type.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Yes. The problem is we might have jurisdictions of a similar type but you might not have education systems of a similar type which can skew it, but, you are right, if we have a similar size, yes.

Deputy C. Curtis:

That as well, but all sorts of comparisons might be handy. Like you say that was there a few years ago but there may be changes since then as well. I think we are just about done. One last question, Minister, in your opinion does the current system of secondary education in Jersey promote equitable opportunities for all students and could they be improved?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Whether the opportunities are equitable I think is under question because of the selective nature of where we are, of the fact that you can access an education if you can pay, which will give more money towards those students. What I will say is that within our 11-16 schools and our primary schools in particular there is a very good standard of education, there is a good standard of opportunity for our people which is equitable across those schools. It is very difficult to answer that question because of the very specific nature of our education system. I would like to see, post-16 in particular, greater co-operation between our providers so there is more choice for our young people. I think schools and colleges are recognising that even down the A-level path or down the vocational path it simply does not work anymore and there is a desperate need for that. Our job and my job is to facilitate that to get it working in the best possible way so that schools and colleges do not feel that it is being done to them, but is being done with them for the right reasons. After all those are the professionals working day in, day out and if you do not listen to those professionals we can make some really poor choices and we do not want to do that.

[17:00]

Deputy C. Curtis:

Okay. I think we had better draw this to a close because we have just come to our time. We do have a lot of questions still so if we can send them to you.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

I will take great pleasure in answering them. We do want to support any reviews. I have been there myself and it is really important you get information so I hope we can provide all the information you want. We did a lot of prep on this one so we can give you that.

Head of Finance Business Partnering:

We still did not anticipate all the questions though but we tried really hard.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

No, we did not.

The Connétable of Grouville:

They involved photocopiers by the way.

Head of Finance Business Partnering:

I bet they did.

Deputy C. Curtis:

Thank you very much, everyone.

[17:01]