

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, SPORT AND
CULTURE BY DEPUTY P.V.F. LE CLAIRE OF ST. HELIER
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 16th NOVEMBER 2010**

Question

Can the Minister summarise the current system for inspecting schools in Jersey and why are the results of such inspections (Validated School Self-Evaluations known as VSSE reports) not all made available to the public?

Answer

The current system for inspecting schools has been updated from the VSSE process.

1. The Professional Partner programme was introduced 18 months ago for all States schools. This is a rigorous process that takes place every term. A Professional Partner who is an experienced officer from the ESC department evaluates all aspects of each school's performance.
2. This monitoring by Professional Partners takes into account a range of data including exam results, finance and safeguarding information.
3. External inspectors are also used within a three year cycle, or more frequently if necessary, to independently verify the schools' own self evaluation. Inspections take in to account the Professional Partner's judgements and can be directed by the Minister to cover the whole school or focus on individual subjects such as leadership or financial management.
4. All States schools are required to participate. Currently, private schools are treated with a light touch but have been invited to join in this programme, although not all have.
5. Schools that do not come under the direct control of the Education Department are required to meet registration requirements that set out basic legal obligations, for example in health and safety.

Professional Partner reports and external reports are used by the schools and their governing bodies, who are then responsible for making them available to parents, usually through the school's annual report. Copies are made available to the senior management team at ESC.

In this way the current system for inspecting schools is systematic and rigorous for all States schools. It develops an honest debate with schools and enables good practice to be identified across the island.

The reports are designed to help improve the standard of schools. They are part of an internal professional debate and provide specific technical information and detail for each school. Publication of such detailed reports in the UK has proved to be counter-productive and potentially detrimental. The confidentiality we offer in Jersey leads to greater professional debate – staff can be open and honest and therefore more effective in improving standards. OFSTED findings shows that published reports tends to make participants less open and for this reason the department does not publish the reports.