

**STATEMENT TO BE MADE BY THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION
ON TUESDAY 6th NOVEMBER 2018**

Independent Review of Head Teacher Appointment Process – First Tower School

During Questions without Notice at the Assembly sitting of 10th July 2018, Deputy C.S. Alves asked me what action I had taken in response to the concerns of parents following the appointment of a new head teacher at First Tower School. I advised the Deputy that I would be asking the Jersey Appointments Commission to review the appointment.¹

I am able to confirm that The Jersey Appointments Commission have completed an independent review at my request and found no evidence to suggest that the appointment to the position of head teacher was not made on merit. There were aspects of the appointment process that could have been improved and the Commission has met with Department officials to discuss the results and the areas where improvements should be made.

The concerns of the parents and question from the Deputy have provided a challenge to our processes which I welcome. They have served as a catalyst for the independent audit and identification of opportunities for improvement. The delivery of these improvements will assure me, parents, teachers and all stakeholders that our appointments are robust and fair, and in accordance with best practice principles and procedure.

I am pleased to advise members that the Commission are providing further support to the Department by actively overseeing the appointment of head teachers until they are assured that improvements are embedded.

The recent appointment of a new head teacher for Springfield School was the first to be overseen and the Commission have confirmed to me that the process was fair, efficient and conducted in accordance with best practice principles and procedure.

I thank the Commission for their independent review and ongoing assistance and I welcome their comments on the constructive engagement of Department officials and the improvements that are already evidenced. I hope Deputy Alves and members recognise the proactive steps we have taken to provide assurance on the First Tower School and future head teacher appointments.

¹https://statesassembly.gov.je/Pages/Hansard.aspx?docid=C5B1FA3D-D99D-457D-B862-794A997B4F7C#_Toc519497721

Appendix A

1. Question and answer
2. Letter from Jersey Appointments Commission, First Tower School review
3. Letter from Jersey Appointments Commission, Springfield School appointment

1.

5.4 Deputy C.S. Alves:

As I am sure the Minister is aware, parents of children from First Tower School have raised concerns regarding the recent appointment of a new head teacher. What action, if any, has the Minister taken to ensure that their concerns have been taken on?

Senator T.A. Vallois:

This was raised with myself only last week with regards to the head teacher. Of course, the appointment happened before my appointment as Minister for Education and also because I am Chairman of the States Employment Board I want to ensure that the process was properly carried out, independently processed and ensure that we can give some reassurance to the parents that the way that this was conducted was in the appropriate manner. So, I have asked the officer to the States Employment Board to request the Jersey Appointments Commission to independently audit that process that was carried out, to give me the reassurance and the parents' reassurance that it was the correct and robust way of achieving that result.

2.

Ref: 181004/LR

Please quote the reference in all correspondence

05 October 2018

By email only

Senator Tracey Vallois
Education Minister
States of Jersey
Cyril le Marquand House
St Helier
Jersey

Dear Minister

Head Teacher Appointment – First Tower School

I am writing to you in my capacity as Commissioner of the Jersey Appointments Commission, following your request that the Commission conducts an independent review of the process to appoint a new head teacher for First Tower School, St Helier. Your letter sought the Commission's assurance that the appointment was 'correct and robust'.

While there is no evidence to suggest that the appointment to the position of head teacher at First Tower School was not made on merit, there are material improvements to the process which should be made.

The details of the review and the findings are set out below.

Background

The review was conducted at your request, after you had been presented with a petition signed by a number of parents with children at First Tower School. The petitioners had sought, unsuccessfully, to see the acting head teacher made head teacher. In addition, on 10 July, you were asked the following formal question, without notice, in the States Assembly by Deputy C.S Alves

'As I am sure the Minister is aware, parents for children at First Tower School have raised concerns regarding the recent appointment of a new head teacher. What action, if any, has the Minister taken to ensure that their concerns have been taken on?'

The role of the Commission

The role of the Commission is to oversee the recruitment of States' employees or appointees to ensure that as far as practicable

- a) the recruitment of persons as States' employees is fair, efficient and conducted in accordance with best practice principles and procedure;
- b) States' employees are appointed on merit;
- c) Members of the States are only involved in the recruitment of States' employees, in accordance with guidelines made under Article 24 of the Law or other circumstances where, in the opinion of the Commission it is appropriate that they are involved.

The Commission has published Guidelines for the recruitment of States Employees, appointees and members of independent bodies, which outlines the standards against which all appointments should be made.

My review of the recruitment of the new head teacher for First Tower School was undertaken in the context of the Commission role and its Guidelines, with the findings set out below.

To conduct the review I obtained all the paperwork associated with the recruitment and met with Education Department officials, who were open and engaged throughout.

- a) **the recruitment of persons as States' employees is fair, efficient and conducted in accordance with best practice principles and procedure;**

There were aspects of the appointment process that could have been improved, to ensure that future processes are fairer, more efficient and in accordance with best practice principles and procedures. These aspects focussed on the composition of the appointment panel, the length of the application period, the role and person specification, and the documentation retained on file.

I have met with Education Department officials to discuss the results of my review, focussing in particular, on those areas where improvements should be made. I have subsequently written to the Department setting out my findings in detail.

To provide further support, I am overseeing the current process to appoint a new head teacher for Springfield school. Together with my fellow Commissioners, the Commission will continue to oversee all appointments to head teacher positions until we are assured that a fair, efficient and robust process, that is in accordance with best practice principles and procedures, is embedded within the Department.

- b) **States' employees are appointed on merit;**

My review of the appointment found no evidence to suggest that the appointment to the position of head teacher at First Tower School was not made on merit.



- c) **Members of the States are only involved in the recruitment of States' employees, in accordance with guidelines made under Article 24 of the Law or other circumstances where, in the opinion of the Commission it is appropriate that they are involved.**

My review of the recruitment did not identify any involvement by a Member of the States in this recruitment process.

Concluding remarks

I hope that my review provides the assurance you are seeking with respect to this role. To confirm, there is no evidence to suggest that the appointment to the position of head teacher at First Tower School was not made on merit. The Commission will play an active role in overseeing the process to appoint head teachers going forward. Engagement with Education Department officials has been constructive and I expect that the improvements that have been suggested will be made.

Yours sincerely



Louise Read
Jersey Appointments Commission - Commissioner



3.

The Jersey
Appointments
Commission



18 October 2018

By email only

Senator Tracey Vallois
Minister for Education
States of Jersey
Cyril le Marquand House
St Helier
Jersey

Dear Minister

Further to my letter of 5 October I have, as indicated in that letter, taken an active role in the recently concluded process to appoint a new head teacher for Springfield School.

I am pleased to confirm that the process followed by Children, Young People, Education and Skills Department officials was fair, efficient and conducted in accordance with best practice principles and procedure. The appointment was made on merit.

The Commission will continue to play an active role in overseeing the process to appoint head teachers going forward so that we can continue to provide appropriate assurance.

Yours sincerely

Louise Read
Jersey Appointments Commission - Commissioner