

## **6. Questions to Ministers without notice - The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture**

### **The Bailiff:**

That completes question time. Then we come to Questions to Ministers without notice. The first period is to the Minister for Education, Sport and Culture. Deputy Lewis.

### **6.1 Deputy K.C. Lewis:**

Further to the announcement from the Minister for Economic Development saying that he would be utilising the services of the R.N.L.I. (Royal National Lifeboat Institution) to provide lifeguards services during the forthcoming season, will the Minister for Education, Sport and Culture be doing likewise to facilitate the lifeguards at Havre des Pas pool, which comes under his jurisdiction?

### **The Deputy of St. Ouen (The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture):**

I have already given a commitment some time ago to maintaining the lifeguard services at Havre des Pas and, as yet, I have had no direct contact with the Minister for Economic Development with the regard to the R.N.L.I. It would seem sensible that if the R.N.L.I. are going to provide services to the whole Island that we should include Havre des Pas in those discussions. Thank you.

### **6.2 Deputy T.M. Pitman:**

Would the moving on of Deputy Green, will the Minister now this time be appointing the most qualified capable and outstanding candidate for the Assistant Minister's job or will he be once again ignoring me? [Laughter]

### **The Deputy of St. Ouen:**

I believe that people can change [Laughter] and also when I come to select my Assistant Minister I will be going through the exact same process that I went through last time. I will be inviting Members to indicate and express their interest in a particular position, I will then be interviewing them and making my final decision based on those interviews. Thank you.

### **6.3 The Deputy of St. Martin:**

Will the Minister inform Members of the criteria for pupils waiting to enter schools who are on the waiting list at private schools? Will the Minister inform Members in fact whether the criteria is such that local people who are on it lose their place if indeed someone from a (j) category may well come to the Island. Is there a rejigging to accommodate a (j) category as opposed to a local resident?

### **The Deputy of St. Ouen:**

It is difficult for me to comment about the waiting lists regarding the private schools on the Island. All I can say is that consideration is given to local people and our young children, although some schools, I believe, do have some form of exam entrance so they are selective in nature. But I have no impression that certain sectors of our community have been favoured in any particular way.

### **6.4 Senator J.L. Perchard:**

The Minister informed the Assembly some time towards the end of last year, I believe, that he was seeking to conduct an independent value for money performance review into those schools who are in receipt of public funding, the fee-paying schools. Will he advise the Assembly which schools have been reviewed and have the reviews been completed?

[14:30]

**The Deputy of St. Ouen:**

All fee-paying schools participated in an intensive review programme which enabled educational consultants to enter the schools and express a view on the education provided and how it was being provided. Those reviews have now been complete and they are informing discussions as we move forward with the fee-paying schools in finding a solution in order to deliver a reduction in grant which is proposed as part of the C.S.R. process.

**6.4.1 Senator J.L. Perchard:**

I did ask which schools have been reviewed and will the Minister, being that the reviews were funded publicly, make these reports available and will he undertake to have the same level of review undertaken to his own provision?

**The Deputy of St. Ouen:**

We continually undertake reviews on the States provision as is required under the Education Law, and I also have the responsibility and ability to instigate timely reviews in any educational establishment on this Island that falls under the Education Law. With regard to the reviews being carried out, I think I had made myself very clear when I said all fee-paying schools had participated in the process that would be - and I will add these words - affected by the proposed reduction in grants. With regards to the reports themselves, yes, I did fund them because it is my responsibility, as I say, to ensure that the schools are operating effectively and the education provided meets certain standards. Are they public reports? No. These are internal reports agreed between the governing bodies of the schools and myself to inform decisions that will need to be made in the coming months.

**Senator J.L. Perchard:**

The Minister is refusing to make these reports public, is that right?

**The Bailiff:**

That is what he said. Deputy Le Hérisssier.

**6.5 Deputy R.G. Le Hérisssier:**

Would the Minister acknowledge that in order to arrive at a well-rounded view about a school it is necessary to examine, not in isolation, but as part of the big picture, their examination results?

**The Deputy of St. Ouen:**

If we are talking about monitoring the progress of each individual within our schools to ensure that they are reaching and able to reach their maximum potential, we are doing that. Over the last number of years we have improved that particular performance measurement with the introduction of professional partners. These are experienced educationalists that go into schools on a termly basis and challenge the headmaster and the teachers at that school regarding the education that they are providing for all individuals within that school, and each individual. I think that that is the best way of ensuring and satisfying concerns that the education that we are providing, whether it be in a States school or, indeed, a fee-paying school, meets the standards that we have come to expect.

**6.5.1 Deputy R.G. Le Hérisssier:**

Just a supplementary. Would the Minister acknowledge that in making that statement that his external assessors do assess examination results and provide him with a summary of their concerns or praise, if that be the case?

**The Deputy of St. Ouen:**

We have a system of assessment that goes on a year by year basis that monitors each individual, because we need to know if individuals need additional support. We need to know if the

individual students are faced with certain challenges, and the whole performance monitoring system has been designed around the individual. If we know, and we can satisfy ourselves as a department that those schools are meeting the needs of the individuals, we do not need to look at examination results. They become meaningless because it is all about improving and maximising the potential of every student within the Island.

**6.6 The Connétable of St. Lawrence:**

I thank the Minister for his presentation at lunch time, at which time he told us of the priorities that he is working towards in his department. However, sometimes it is those areas that may not be on his radar that we must bring to his attention. I ask therefore whether the Minister is aware that due to traffic congestion there is potential for an accident to happen during drop-off and pick-up times at Bel Royal School? If he is aware of this, how is his department addressing it?

**The Deputy of St. Ouen:**

I am personally not aware of the traffic congestion issues at Bel Royal School, although I will say that I am well aware of the traffic congestion issues in and around Wellington Road and Mont Millais courtesy of certain Deputies. I will certainly be more than happy to sit down with the Constable, together with T.T.S. and work through any possibility to improve matters.

**The Connétable of St. Lawrence:**

Thank you, that was my supplementary question and the Deputy has confirmed it.

**6.7 The Deputy of St. John:**

I was taken aback to get on to my computer recently, just at lunch time, and found that we had all been circulated with a quick response by the Minister to the question I put in the House this morning on free nursery school timing for families at the State schools. Given that the Minister can find additional funding between now and September of this year to finance the additional 10 hours for quite a number of these children, will he also find money within his budget to reinstate school milk?

**The Deputy of St. Ouen:**

I am not finding additional funds to support pre-school, what I am saying, and the decision I have made, is that in future whether the parent accesses private or public early years' education, they will be offered the same opportunity of free hours. With regards to school milk, I think that there is an opportunity for the States Members to engage with Jersey Milk, because after all, although we have stopped providing school milk we continue to provide substantial sums of money to the dairy farmers themselves through direct grants, and it might be that the Jersey Dairy might choose, or could be encouraged, to look at contributing and reintroducing school milk to the schools that require it.

**6.8 Deputy A.E. Jeune:**

What we do not seem to get an awful lot of in this House is good news. I want to refer to what I call the class of 2010. I do not know whether you have been to Highlands to see the tremendous advance that has been made with young 14 to 16 year-olds group in vocational work. There is a question coming at the end of it, but the point is I think it is very important that we are aware of this tremendous work that is being done up there. It is not a little catering class, it is a hospitality class.

**The Bailiff:**

Are you coming to the question, Deputy?

**Deputy A.E. Jeune:**

Yes. There is mechanics and there is building and hairdressing and beauty, and it is absolutely marvellous. Will the Minister please tell this Assembly that they will do more of this for these young people? **[Approbation]**

**The Deputy of St. Ouen:**

I am greatly encouraged by the enthusiasm shown by the Deputy regarding the new 14 to 16 year-old vocational courses. I would invite any States Member to visit and see for themselves what Deputy Jeune is seeing, which is over 100 young and focused students fully engaged in vocational courses that will prepare them for work as and when they are ready to access it.

**6.9 Senator B.E. Shenton:**

It is my understanding that the independent reports on the fee-paying schools were all glowing. Does the Minister have any intention of carrying out similar sort of inspections on schools such as Haute Vallée and Grainville?

**The Deputy of St. Ouen:**

As I said before, we carry out very regular inspections on all of our schools. I am not giving way. Far more regular than perhaps we have in the past undertaken in conjunction with the fee-paying schools. It is something that in future I will be paying attention to. I have no concerns about either Haute Vallée, Grainville or any other of our States secondary schools. **[Approbation]** They are providing an excellent education for that matter.

**6.9.1 Senator B.E. Shenton:**

Supplementary. Will the inspections be by the same independent people?

**The Deputy of St. Ouen:**

We use only the top quality and experienced advisers and they are independent and are from the same group.

**6.10 Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:**

Given the controversy that surrounded arranging hustings in schools at the last election, could the Minister announce what his policy will be for the forthcoming election?

**The Deputy of St. Ouen:**

Better. **[Laughter]** Seriously, we are working with the Scrutiny Panel to determine how best we can provide and encourage our youngsters to take part in the electoral process. However, we do need to recognise that they are and should be considered to be young adults with the freedom of choice.

**6.11 Deputy J.A. Hilton:**

I was talking to a friend over the weekend who is a qualified teacher currently living in the U.K. and within the educational authority where she lives, she tells me that classroom assistants teach in the classroom in primary and secondary education. So the question I have for the Minister is do classroom assistants routinely teach here and, if they do, can the Minister inform me in what sort of context does this happen?

**The Deputy of St. Ouen:**

I can honestly say that I probably cannot answer this question in as much detail as the Deputy would like. What I can say is that we do use teaching assistants in a number of our different facilities to support individuals that need additional education. Those that are qualified absolutely will teach, will encourage and will help individuals in a various number of subjects. If the Deputy wants a far more detailed answer, I am more than happy to put her in touch with the officers at my department.

**6.11.1 Deputy J.A. Hilton:**

The point that was made to was that classroom assistants in the U.K. routinely teach on a daily basis and I was wondering whether that was occurring here?

**The Deputy of St. Ouen:**

They are teacher's assistants and by the very nature of the name it describes what their role is. We have qualified and experienced teachers that are responsible for each class and they can be supported, where necessary, with these teaching assistants.

**The Bailiff:**

Very well. That brings question to the Minister for Education, Sport and Culture to a close.