

STATES OF JERSEY

Education and Home Affairs Student Suspension Review Sub-Panel

FRIDAY, 29th JANUARY 2010

Panel:

Deputy T.M. Pitman of St. Helier (Chairman)

Deputy J.M. Maçon of St. Saviour

Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade

Professor P. Munn (Panel Adviser)

Ms. G. Bunting (Panel Adviser)

Witnesses:

The Director of Education, Sport and Culture

The Head of Beaulieu Convent School

The Head of De la Salle College

In attendance:

Ms. S. Power (Scrutiny Officer)

[10:48]

Deputy T.M. Pitman:

Obviously you were in the room before, but I will go through the pleasantries again. We really appreciate you coming along and I welcome you here. I will get everyone to introduce themselves for the transcript. The other point I have to draw your attention to is the statement on the table. The key part of that, as I say, is that you are covered with privilege; anything you say, as long as you do not tell us anything that you know not to be true, which I am sure will not happen. So with that I will introduce myself. Deputy Trevor Pitman, I am Chairman of the Sub-Panel, looking at school suspensions, which is obviously part of the Home Affairs and Education main panel.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

Deputy Jeremy Macon for St. Saviour.

Deputy M. Tadier:

I am Deputy Montford Tadier for St. Brelade.

Professor P. Munn (Panel Adviser):

I am Pamela Munn. I am a Professor of Curriculum Research at the University of Edinburgh. I am the adviser to the panel.

Ms. G. Bunting (Panel Adviser):

I am Gill Bunting, former teacher in Jersey.

The Director for Education Sport and Culture:

Director for Education, Sport and Culture.

Ms. S. Power (Scrutiny Officer):

Sam Power, Scrutiny Officer.

The Head of Beaulieu Convent School:

I am Chris Beirne, Headmaster at Beaulieu.

The Head of De la Salle College :

Jason Turner, Headmaster at De La Salle.

Deputy T.M. Pitman:

Thank you. I would like to start by asking whether both of your schools follow your own suspension policy or is that slotted into Education's or a mix of the 2?

The Head of Beaulieu Convent School:

I think in responding to that, and to save the Professor time in asking questions later, I will explain the context of the situation with the private schools in Jersey as opposed to the provided schools. As the Director kindly said ... and we have invited the director here to be with us because we see ourselves as part of the overall contribution to education within Jersey, we are not in the private sector here to create something completely alternative or to show or demonstrate that the provided sector is not as good as we are. That is not what we are here for. We want to be a part of and we have been richly part of the educational provision over many years, established by De La Salle and other religious orders and Catholic schools in the Island for a significant amount of time. So a rich part of the Island's history already. The reason for inviting the Director is really as an expression of that partnership, to want to be working with the States provision and making a contribution to young people in the Island in the best way that we can. So that is an important start, first of all. The other incidences, of course you will probably more aware of this than I am, but with the Education Act there is a clear distinction in types of schools: provided, fee-paying provided, which are all States schools, and private schools. Those private schools are exactly the same as the independent schools in the United Kingdom. So, like the independent schools in the United Kingdom that are not required to be compliant with statutory guidance, the independent schools along with, I also understand, the city technology colleges and city academies and sixth form colleges, are not required to comply with statutory guidance, neither are we. That said, we always read and scrutinise and take part in the discussions around the formation of policy. We have our own individual school policies. So in answer to your question, neither De La Salle nor Beaulieu follow the States policy on its suspensions or exclusions. The good ideas and materials within it are contained or reflected within our own policy and practice.

Deputy T.M. Pitman:

The natural question to follow up then is how do they differ, your suspension policies?

The Head of Beaulieu Convent School:

I will answer for Beaulieu and I pass to my colleague from De La Salle, if I may, to Jason. We do not have a suspension policy at Beaulieu. We have a behaviour policy. Now, I need to context that within your overall understanding of what sort of school we are. This is fundamental to where we begin and where we end. Beaulieu was established in 1951 as a private Catholic Convent Girls School, run by a French religious order who moved to the Island and worked within the Island for very little reward. Twelve years ago the property that they purchased in 1951 was gifted completely to the people of Jersey; a significant gift from a French religious order to the people of Jersey. It was established in trust to provide for young ladies in Jersey an education within a Christian environment. That is fundamental to the trust of that school. So I route you from there into the principles of what that school is asked to

achieve. It is asked to deliver a Catholic education. The Professor will be well familiar with Catholic schools in Scotland and indeed in the United Kingdom. Within that system there is a fundamental difference that relates to our philosophy and our ethos, compared to that of the state sector in the United Kingdom and around the world. That fundamental difference is based and built on faith. It does not mean that we are an evangelical school. It means that the concepts of justice, peace, love, compassion, care and respect for the individual person are paramount in all that we do. In fact, formation on that level is an *a priori* for us, followed by the educational provision. If we cannot get the opportunity right where we see every child created in the image and likeness of God and treated in that way, where we have that level of respect that runs through all of our community - and that is an important starting point of culture - we will be unsuccessful in delivering the educational side. So it is quite important for me to set that context for you, because Catholic schools in Jersey provide, certainly at Beaulieu, a distinctive provision. It has done so, because it has had religious sisters wandering around the place at some period of time. Indeed many people say to me: "How is Sister Mary Louise?" The response I give is: "Have you seen Hogwarts where Headless Nick continues to float around" That spirit pervades the corridors and ethos of that building. We are so fortunate to have had a religious community enabling and creating that environment. So it is really important that you understand the culture of Beaulieu. Jason will be able to explain to you the rich tradition that the brothers brought through their period of time at De La Salle and the culture that that created in that school and the harmony that exists between both our schools as Catholic schools. So our starting point is fundamentally different. I say that because if you ask me a question later about inclusion, it is infused with those principles. So it is a starting point, a context which is very important to understand. If you feel comfortable with that understanding then I can carry on further with the detail of how we respond and it will all make sense as a result of those starting principles. So that is our *a priori*.

Deputy M. Tadier:

I think that has been a very good brief history and I think it certainly has been enlightening for us. I think the question really then is how does the quality that you have ... and you say that you have taken the good ideas from the Education Department policy and presumably left the bits which are not good. But how does that compare?

The Head of Beaulieu Convent School:

Let me explain, our policy has been in existence for a period of time. Now what I would say is that the good elements within the department's policy, I believe, are reflected in our practice.

The Director for Education Sport and Culture:

I think the essential difference is that the school does not have to ask permission of the Director of Education to either suspend or exclude.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Are there any other differences which you can identify between your policies? Or perhaps it would be useful if you both outline how your policy works and what the basic principles are.

The Head of De la Salle College :

I think if I refer back to the original question.

Deputy T.M. Pitman:

That would be good.

The Head of De la Salle College :

I think you asked me, as a private school do you use your own suspension policy. The short answer is yes, but our policy is in line with U.K. (United Kingdom) law, the code of practice in the U.K. We also

ensure that our policy follows the principles outlined in Education, Sport and Culture's policy. Our local policy also has to comply with the values of our order. The De La Salle community has schools in over 87 countries, a million students each year are educated in our schools. So it is very important that we are local to Jersey our policy has to adopt that ethos and those values of the international order. At the heart of that policy, tolerance, respect and reconciliation. I think our policy makes very clear the boundaries within which we exist as a community. It is necessarily different, as the Director has said, because my lines of responsibility are not to Education, Sport and Culture. De La Salle is a private school and so my line of responsibility is to my own governing body and also to the Brother Provincial who is in charge of the English and also the Maltese province, within which Jersey falls for some strange reason.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Okay. Well let us go on to my question then I suppose now you have both answered the first question. Could you outline in perhaps more detail how the suspension policy works and how if you did have to invoke it ever what would the criteria be for that?

The Head of Beaulieu Convent School:

As I have already said, I do not have a discrete suspension policy, I have a behaviour policy. Prefixed by the principles I have mentioned earlier, we are a Christian school where staff and parents and pupils are highly valued and mutual respect and dignity is expected of all of them. You will know from the statistics that in the now 4 years that I have been at Beaulieu and prior to that there has not been a suspension in the school. We do not suspend.

[11:00]

I think therefore I have never had to use the guidelines within the department's policy. What we do do is the behaviour management policy provides us with an opportunity to work extremely closely with our parents and with our students. I will give you an example, in my previous experience working at Victoria College and Jersey College for Girls, pupils would be divided into pastoral groups and the Principal of Jersey College for Girls talked about the value of what house groups or pastoral groups provided in that context. Those groups would probably be something in the region of about 20 or 22 students. Going to Beaulieu I realised that if we were the caring face of academic excellence and we were true to our mission, we needed to improve that. We needed to be absolutely certain, if we were true about the dignity of every single individual, and I wanted a strategy and a process that ensured that we were. Parents spend a lot of their money sending their children to private schools. Parents value their children and love their children more than anything else in the world. If you are fortunate to have a private banker - if you are not fortunate to have one, certainly like me, you will now somebody that does or you will know one - you will know the value that a private banker gives to somebody's financial arrangements. In a similar context what I wanted to do was to ensure that every single member of staff working within my institution had that value and care for students. So all students were grouped in much smaller groups and we developed a mentor system rather than a pastoral system, where parents had direct link to an adult in the school, not necessarily a teacher, but all people working in the community who could show that they were expressing care for all the students in that community. Up to about a maximum of 14, so you could be very certain as a parent that you had your private banker in relation to your group of students. Parents could telephone, could email, could deal with all the issues around those 14 students with a personal adult. Now the creation of that has had an amazing effect, because what it has done is it has enabled all of our parents to have an immediate contact without having to wait for a week or 3 days to try and go through some more complicated system. It has enabled all of the mentors to completely understand and know and deal with, in a very professional way, 14 students, with a very small group of kids, and to know them much better. The results of that over the last 12 months have enabled me to feel that I am confident that the ethos and the principles of dignity and care

and compassion are working well. It is as a result of strategies which my other colleagues have already said being put in place within schools that do 2 things, (1) it secures what we are trying to achieve and (2) gives high levels of parental satisfactions, meeting their expectations. You know it is pointless me say I am a caring face of academic excellence, every school tries to be academically excellent, every school tries to be caring, but my mission and purpose within the context of my own school is to ensure that that mission and value happens. It is driven not by the chequebook and payment, it is driven by a vocation, as it was driven by a vocation of the sisters that established the school before my arrival as with the brothers and De La Salle. So, there are those fundamental differences which enable us to provide and perhaps to give more focus to our specific challenges.

Professor P. Munn:

May I ask you a question about the mentor system? It sounds a very interesting system. You mentioned they were not all teachers. Could you say a little bit about who they are and any training they had?

The Head of Beaulieu Convent School:

I would be delighted. You would imagine that changing the culture was going to be a bit of a challenge. So did I, until we tried to do it. What we did not do was force everybody to be engaged in the culture. We decided to enable it to be an invitation opportunity. What we did do was we said: "Look, this is non-negotiable. How we get there is totally negotiable." So the fact that we are going to do this is going to happen. How we get there is totally negotiable. We found that, barring the facilities team for whom it would be a little bit more of a challenge to suddenly pull themselves out of knocking a wall down and dealing with groups of students, that there was a very, very high take up from support staff in wanting to be part of this programme. The culture of the school is such that it is like a big family. That is a very fortunate culture that I have. The staff then underwent quite a significant amount of training. They have continued to have in-service training. That support came from the Education Department in the process which we used a solution focused approach towards pastoral and mentor support. That solution focused approach was translated into 6 or 8 hours of training for all mentors, with annual reviews. Those mentors meet with the Director of Pastoral Services and indeed, Professor, you might advise me on this, we are 2 and a half coming into the third year of this, planning to review it at the end of this third year, to see the implications and changes and to see what is working and what is not. But I believe a direct result of that intervention as enabled me to know, as a head teacher, in more detail the things that I need to know in relation to every child in the school, because I only need to have a conversation with one mentor, who is my main point of contact. So if I was trying to answer your question in relation to how our system works differently, I would be fairly confident that at the end of the review you will see that we have enhanced the provision by taking certain steps to reduce the necessity for any behavioural or attitudinal issues that may, if they ever occur, lead me towards having to suspend or expel.

Deputy T.M. Pitman:

So are you saying no one has ever been excluded in your time?

The Head of Beaulieu Convent School:

Nobody has ever been excluded in my time, no.

Deputy T.M. Pitman:

I am sorry. How long was that?

The Head of Beaulieu Convent School:

I am into my fourth year. In fact, I have never excluded anyone from a school where I have had responsibility to do so over the last 10 years in Jersey.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Is that on ideological grounds?

The Head of Beaulieu Convent School:

You mean in terms Beaulieu?

Deputy M. Tadier:

Your ethos and in terms of Beaulieu, because you said you do not suspend, does that mean you do not believe in suspension?

The Head of Beaulieu Convent School:

No, I would be stupid and it would be ridiculous for me to suggest - I am conscious that my colleague has not had a chance to talk - that suspensions or expulsions were something I should not believe in. Clearly, in statutory guidance in the U.K. we see that there has to be some form of appropriate sanction. What I am saying is that those levels of sanctions are not applicable in the environment and culture where I am now head teacher.

Deputy M. Tadier:

If we had a spectrum with 2 extremes on it, one extreme where people believe that suspensions are a useful and necessary tool, which can be used and should be used if it is appropriate and then you have the other extreme where people think they should never be used. Where would you say you fall in that category?

The Head of Beaulieu Convent School:

In the school in which I am operating I do not believe I will have a need to use them. If I were to take a post in, for example, the Glyn Technology College in Epsom, which in 2002 had quite a significant landmark issue, then I would want to be able to use them. So it is appropriate to the context and the school environment in which you are operating.

Deputy M. Tadier:

It is probably fair to say you prefer communication to ex-communication? **[Laughter]**

The Head of Beaulieu Convent School:

The Catholic Church rule ex-communication Vatican(?) 2 and I am would have no desire or wish to bring back the inquisition. However, that said, yes I think I would prefer communication to ex-communication.

Deputy T.M. Pitman:

Would you like to come in on that note?

The Head of De la Salle College :

No, I am quite happy and if you have got a different question for me I will answer it in the best way that I can. Are we on to question 2?

Deputy M. Tadier:

I think what we are interested in ... sorry we sometimes divert from the rigid plan. But we will get back to it. I think what we are interested, as a panel, in finding out is ... we probably all realise that suspension should be a last resort. I think everyone acknowledges that. We are really trying to find out the best way to go towards more of a scenario where we want to avoid suspensions pretty much at all costs apart from extreme circumstances, and it would be good to know your general ethos on suspensions, if they fit into your overall plan and if you could envisage a reasonable situation where you

would have to use one.

The Head of De la Salle College :

I think that sort of is question 2 really, is it not?

Deputy T.M. Pitman:

Yes, I think so.

The Head of De la Salle College :

Yes. So, I can draw on my experience here in Jersey, but for the last 20 years I have taught in 5 different schools and I will refer to my experience on the mainland, if I may, and also my experience here in Jersey. Thank you. I think there are a number of reasons why I have certainly seen people being suspended. I am sure you will appreciate that in my previous schools I was not the head teacher. I was deputy head or head of department. But some of the reasons that I can recall pupils being suspended are violent or threatening behaviour, possessing illegal substances, serious examples of bullying, homophobic, racist and even the misuse of the school internet. Although here you may feel that the school is in a privileged position, my experience is in working in schools in the inner-city environment. So I do have that wide range. So for me, I think, suspensions are an integral aspect of a multi-layered behaviour policy. Since my appointment as Head, and I was appointed just over 3 years ago in fact, I have suspended 7 pupils. I do not want to ... at least I need to be very careful that we do not identify the individuals, but I can certainly say that the reasons for my decisions to suspend those pupils range from, for example, smoking a cigarette on the school property to another pupil who tried to bypass our internet security protocols to ... well, whatever he was trying to do the system caught him, but it was still completely unacceptable. So, in those 7 cases I made the decision that it was appropriate to use one of my most severe sanctions.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Do you think that maybe you have had to suspend 7 and Beaulieu has not had to suspend any may be due to the fact that it is a boys' school? Is there an inherent nature in boys which makes them more likely to be suspended?

The Head of De la Salle College :

I think you would appreciate it is very difficult for me to sit in the shoes of another person. It is hard for me to compare since I have no real understanding of Beaulieu in the sense that Mr. Beirne would have. I can certainly explain, as I hope I have done, why I chose to suspend them and I know Mr. Beirne talked to you why he has not yet had to take that measure.

The Head of Beaulieu Convent School:

Just to support Mr. Turner here, my understanding - and the Professor can help I hope - from the reading that I have done and certainly reading that has come from the Social Exclusion Unit in the United Kingdom, has shown that while the majority of excluded pupils, let us be general here, tend to be white, male teenagers, children and many with special educational needs. Those with special educational needs are 6 times more likely in the United Kingdom than the average to be excluded. There are nevertheless no universally common features to pupils who are excluded. Remedies must be tailored, probably, to meet the needs of those individuals who are. Here I think - and you know this is a personal view from my own reading - some schools in the United Kingdom or some local education authorities in the United Kingdom may lack the resources to do so and some schools may lack the will to do so. I do not believe the latter statement, in lacking the will to do so, exists in Jersey, because the experience I have had over 10 or 14 years now working within Jersey is that there is a genuine commitment and more recently over the last 3 to 5 years there is a genuine commitment to want to get it right. Now, that moves from my colleague on my left here to all of you. You are here, he is here, we are here because we want to get it

right. We have the opportunity and capability and ability to do that, whereas the complex scenarios in the United Kingdom are radically different from our small Island. It is difficult for us to raise specific questions about specific students at specific schools, because it tends to create that polarisation and there is no problem between the actions that De La Salle have to take in its own context and the fact that I may choose not to take them. One thing is for certain, indeed we often text each other early in the morning. It was 6.30 a.m. this morning. We communicate and it would not surprise you that when we do come across an issue we will share that and have a professional conversation between ourselves and/or other professionals. A question you asked earlier on.

[11:15]

The Director for Education Sport and Culture:

Could I just clarify, because what you are saying in looking at the suspension statistics across the Island is a fairly normal distribution and when you benchmark it against the U.K. you are not seeing a major difference, in fact the figures are slightly lower, except for the fact that there is no permanent suspension. What you have seen is you have seen a fee-paying provided selective, 2 fee-paying selective schools that have had virtually no suspensions or one exclusion over that significant period of time. In relation to Beaulieu and De La Salle, if the head teachers do not mind me saying, they are not selective on academic ability, they are selective on ability to pay and obviously they are Catholic schools, so one would expect first choice to go to Catholics. Then you have the state sector. When you put them all together you see a profile that is fairly normal to a local authority in the U.K. and you are seeing statistics that are below that. So given the structure of education it is not surprising that the high number of suspensions are in the non-fee-paying provided schools. So what in actual fact these statistics are showing you is partly about the structure of education in Jersey.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Can I jump in very quickly? There is clearly a statistical significance between 7 suspensions and 0 on the one hand and I think rather than it being to do with boys and girls it is probably partly to do with the context of the school and also to do maybe with the ethos to do with suspensions. But, Mr. Beirne, what I would ask you is what would you do in a context where somebody is caught smoking at your school or somebody is caught trying to bypass the computer system to perhaps access inappropriate sites?

The Head of Beaulieu Convent School:

Let me give you a more extreme example. I can see the trap door opening here.

Deputy M. Tadier:

It does relate to question 4.

The Head of Beaulieu Convent School:

I know, but I want to respond to that to get to the heart of the matter to save my talking about smoking. The question ultimately is what would I do in a situation where I may consider the option of suspending a student? In other words, in terms of values whether somebody should be expelled or suspended as a result of smoking a cigarette or shooting a student. I mean, I am not going to get into that. What I will tell you is what I have done with a particular case, which normally one would expect me to have excluded. Would you like me to do that?

Deputy M. Tadier:

I am not asking you when would you suspend someone , I am specifically asking what would you do if somebody was smoking?"

The hearing temporarily moved into private session.

Deputy T.M. Pitman:

So, it has not arisen where you have had to, perhaps, suggest that a pupil would be taken out and turned to a state school?

The Head of Beaulieu Convent School:

No. The only occasions that happens is when, again, it is usually to do with finance and I continually, even at that point, try to find ways in which we can keep the girls as part of the family. The other scenario has happened and is happening regularly with me, in other words I am getting continual requests from students, within the state schools, girls and boys, to have access to Beaulieu.

[11:30]

Deputy T.M. Pitman:

Is that the same for you, Mr. Turner?

The Head of De La Salle College:

Sorry, the question again please?

Deputy T.M. Pitman:

Has it happened, in your time as head, that you have felt that a pupil should really be at another school and had those conversations ... perhaps what I am getting at is informal exclusion, if you like. You have decided a student does not fit, for whatever reason; does that ever occur?

The Head of De La Salle College:

When, I suppose ... yes, if I can answer it in this way, if you do not mind. When a parent applies for their son to come to the school, I personally interview the parent and the pupils and I make very clear what De La Salle stands for, the standard of behaviour that I expect and so before the parents even consider accepting a place, were it to be offered, they are aware of the standards that I would expect. So, as I do not vary the standards, the parents may themselves decide that, for whatever reason, the school is no longer suitable for their son and as we are not part of a provided sector they are more than welcome to choose to move him. But I can recall no conversation myself where I have initiated that.

Deputy T.M. Pitman:

Sorry, you wanted to add something?

The Head of Beaulieu Convent School:

I just want to add a colour, because I think there is a whole element that we could, indeed, risk not mentioning and that is, you know, you started the last session with a question about inclusion and how do we feel it was going. A lot of what we have talked about is behaviour. One of the most fundamental elements around inclusion, and the professor will remind you of that, is the ability for me to be absolutely certain that every child in my school is making the best possible progress against the curriculum entitlement and offering they are getting and, certainly, in my experience, in the United Kingdom, as an OFSTED inspector and visiting a number of schools where this has been the principal agenda over the last 5 years, and one is asked to examine that with a very fine tooth comb, it is one of the major questions that one faces. Challenges around potential suspension often, I suspect, certainly in the United Kingdom in the schools that I have seen there, arise from a disengagement with the curriculum that is being taught, a curriculum that may not necessarily be appropriate for the level of all of the students in a particular group or class, unlike the fee-paying colleges - and I speak for Beaulieu and I am fairly certain for

De La Salle - that the selection is completely non-academic. So I have a range right the way from below

80 C.A.T. (Cognitive Abilities Test) score, in fact I have children into year 7 this year who really should not be in secondary school, for whom we have had to create an alternative curriculum for them to enable them to develop skills to engage with an appropriate pathway. The challenge we have in Jersey and I think one we are responding to ... you only have to look at Le Rocquier, the innovative project they have tried to operate in the last year or so with year 7, being brave to look at an alternative centre, developing a new curriculum. We are trying to work towards creating these opportunities whereby the appropriate pathways work, to enable and engage students with the most appropriate curriculum to ensure they make the best possible progress. Now, the Director may want to come in here, but he did mention earlier that one of the issues was around the structure of schools in Jersey and, clearly, that over the last decade has delivered a fairly fixed but now developing menu in terms of curriculum provision. I am very excited about the conversations on work that is going on, that I hear going on from my colleagues, that I hear going on from the work and reports that have been commissioned by the Education Department, that for the first time in perhaps 10 years the lights are turning on in Jersey and we can be confident that over the next 10 years we are going to have a better, more effective, more efficient and better placed provision across the Island. That will take resourcing, that will take political will. You know, as politicians, if you are going to come out and say: "Education, education, education" you will win my vote and I know you will win the votes of lots of other people, because it will take a significant amount of commitment and all of this discussion is about making it better. So, from the suspension; if you are trying to reduce the nature and quality and levels of a suspension and your question said: "What was my view?" in one of the questions, well this is it, you know, do not just look at the negatives, be solution focused and look at the positives. Look at how we can innovate and gauge, develop and support all of that going on in our current provision.

The Director of Education, Sport and Culture:

Can I just clarify the difference between the provided sector and the non-provided sector in relation to expectations, regardless of what happens in practice? In terms of formal exclusions, or informal exclusions, particularly informal exclusions, they are not allowed in the provided sector. That is against policy. In an independent school, it is down to the values and the culture of the school, because the school contracts directly with the parents and can, if it so chooses, enter into an informal arrangement with the parents or, indeed, a formal arrangement whereby, for whatever reason, they determine to end that contract. So, it is about expectations. One might look at informal exclusion, in the independent sector, as something that is possibly not desirable but it is not forbidden. In the provided sector, it is neither desirable nor allowed.

Deputy T.M. Pitman:

Obviously, we are particularly interested in any knock-on effect that there would be because, obviously, as you say, it is legal within the private sector.

The Director of Education, Sport and Culture:

Yes. I think if you look at the numbers that we have talked about over the last, you know, so many years, what you will see is that the numbers are not significant enough to cause alarm.

Deputy T.M. Pitman:

Okay. We will move to Deputy Maçon.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

Yes. Very briefly, when we interviewed Victoria College and J.C.G. (Jersey College for Girls) we heard that they offered bursaries. Do you offer any and how many, or the percentage; how much?

The Head of Beaulieu Convent School:

I think we have committed about £60,000, over the last year, on bursaries and support. I cannot give

you the percentage; what I can tell you is that everybody that has applied for a bursary or support has been given support. So, I have not turned ... we have not ... in fairness, it is not me that awards the support, it is the finance sub-committee and the Board of Directors that take that view. I have recommended everybody that has asked me to recommend them and every recommendation I have made has been supported.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

And De La Salle?

The Head of De La Salle College:

Sorry?

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

Sorry. Do you offer a bursary?

The Head of De La Salle College:

We do not, no, but we do have several trusts that parents may apply to who will be able to support to a lesser or greater degree. Each of those trusts has very specific reasons on the way that they may operate their bursaries and I am quite enabled to recommend to a parent that they approach a particular trust. If, for example, that I am aware that there is a difficulty staying in the school when they move to the sixth form, I am aware of a trust that would help and support a student in that way.

Deputy T.M. Pitman:

One area, as you will have noticed earlier, that we are very interested in is Asperger's Syndrome and Autistic Spectrum Disorder. What provision is provided in your schools?

The Head of Beaulieu Convent School:

I am very fortunate that 2 years ago I took on 2 people with a high level experience in Asperger's. I have a number of students who ... and take absolutely correctly what my colleague from J.C.G. said earlier, the spectrum is so wide, but there are identifiable students who have quite clear and specific needs within that spectrum and I have a number of students, within my community, who have that. You will not be surprised to hear that, you know, I will move mountains in order to provide the right support for those students. If I am true to the ethos of what I am talking about and I am true to the fact that I believe every child is made in the image and likeness of God, then that driver is there within our community and I have, over the last 2 years, 3 years, significantly ... or we have, at Beaulieu significantly built on this provision, because we recognise there is a growing need within that completely broad spectrum of intake, non-selective academic intake, and we are just developing now a completely new unit, which will be staffed by 3 professionals and 7 teaching assistants, in order to provide very specific resources that will enable our girls and girls that may be looking to come to Beaulieu for this specific support, the opportunity to do so. Now, this is in partnership with Education, Sport and Culture, with whom we could not achieve this without their help and support and professional guidance, and the support and guidance we have received from them has been second to none. It has been great and is enabling this to happen and I am very excited about it, as are the team, but wherever you do this it is expensive and that has to be recognised in the whole scheme of things. The experience you saw at Grainville, on a much larger scale ... I am not saying we are replicating that but we are recognising the need to be able to respond to this and, you know, from what I see, we are able to create opportunities - and I am sure it is the same at Grainville - for students to work within a normal environment, happily and safely, where otherwise it would be impossible perhaps for them to do so.

Deputy T.M. Pitman:

Mr. Turner, the experience from your own school, with young people with Autistic Spectrum Disorder

or Asperger's Syndrome. Can you meet their needs or do you feel you fail in any way?

The Head of De La Salle College:

If I can answer the question in a particular way, which may seem to be rather rambling and I am not intending to be, I just want to make sure I give you a full picture.

Deputy T.M. Pitman:

We are used to rambling in the States, it is okay.

The Head of De La Salle College:

I could not possibly comment on that.

The Head of Beaulieu Convent School:

We are used to listening to you guys doing it [Laughter].

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

It is obviously very short and brief.

The Head of De La Salle College:

We are non-selective on ability but, clearly, parents have to pay our fees so there is an element of selection. We do have a wide range of abilities so currently in the school we have boys with a cognitive ability of 78 to 129. One of the principles of the De La Salle Order, to which we belong, is that their schools are non-selective. That is very important because, and I would echo what Mr. Beirne has said, we believe that our mission is to provide an education, regardless of the individual demands from an educational perspective put our way by a particular student. But our average profile, as a non-selective school, is that we have an average C.A.T. score of 101. Within that, as we have already alluded to, there is quite a range of students with specific educational needs. We have a designated Educational Needs Co-ordinator and those educational needs are met in a whole variety of different ways. But, clearly, we are not part of the provided sector and so there is a limit to what we can provide. So, I mentioned before that I have a meeting with all parents, before they make the decision on whether to attend De La Salle or not and at that meeting, if a student has particular educational needs, then I will inform them on exactly what we can provide. Now, it is undoubtedly the case that there are occasions when state schools can provide far better than we can; they are resourced to do so because they are part of the provided sector, but I feel that by explaining carefully to parents what we can do, and being completely honest with them, so if I say we will do it, we will do it. It then places on the parents an opportunity to make a decision. Ultimately it is their choice. But I feel it would be quite wrong of me to accept a student with Asperger's, for example, without first taking the time and the trouble to be very clear to the parents what we can provide and then say to them: "The choice is yours."

Deputy M. Tadier:

It is relevant now, I think, to ask - we asked the other 2 gentlemen before - is there any provision for any kind of coming together, pooling of resources, so that, say, it ends up that you both have a student with Autistic Spectrum Disorder, would you ever consider using your resources in tandem?

The Head of Beaulieu Convent School:

It is certainly something that we ... we have had a long history of collaborative teaching and Jason and I have been in discussions more recently about building on that and it would not surprise me at all if that were to be the case, as we move forward over the next couple of years.

Deputy M. Tadier:

You have never had reason to do it up until now, in that context?

The Head of Beaulieu Convent School:

The context is changing pretty radically across the Island, with every review that is underway, in terms of provision and all sorts of things. The context is changing radically in the United Kingdom. If there was an issue with a student, we would certainly share expertise. I have certainly allowed my team or, certainly, the head of my team to go and work and support and give advice in other schools and there would be no reason why that would not happen with De La Salle, if it were appropriate for that to happen for De La Salle.

[11:45]

Deputy T.M. Pitman:

Sorry to take it back a couple of stages, but one thing that is troubling me; obviously, as you have outlined your school's ethos very well, its based in the Catholic faith.

The Head of Beaulieu Convent School:

Try to keep it simple.

Deputy T.M. Pitman:

Yet it is obvious you have students who are not Catholic.

The Head of Beaulieu Convent School:

Yes.

Deputy T.M. Pitman:

What I am trying to get at is could that impact when we are looking at things ... when you might decide a student is best not at that school, if really their beliefs, faith, it is completely at odds; would that raise serious issues for you?

The Head of Beaulieu Convent School:

Is the Pope Catholic? I mean, Trevor, I do not want to get into a religious bigotry here. What I want to say is that we are completely explicit about what we are. Last year's intake was 90 per cent Catholic and we were talking, you know, a small number of students here. The parents that apply to Beaulieu, come to Beaulieu because they are looking for the Beaulieu experience. The parents that apply to Jersey College for Girls, in my experience they - if I may speak with the principal present - go to Jersey College for Girls because they are looking for that experience and quite rightly too. We go back to those market forces, you were talking about with the headmaster of Victoria College, parental choice is an important element in all of the provision and that is why we are proud to be part of the Jersey provision. Some parents say: "I had a Catholic education. I want my children to have a Catholic education, because it is good discipline." I have heard that said a number of times. That good discipline, when you probe, often relates to the fact that a sister in a habit stared at the children as they walked through a corridor back in the 1960s and they sort of had that cultural experience which, somehow, they came to love. If a child came to Beaulieu, they would come to Beaulieu knowing, and parents knowing, that they were coming to a Catholic school and that they would have to be in sympathy with - the same with all the people we employ - our values and ethos. Now, if they suddenly got up on a Hyde Park corner and started saying that the Pope's the antichrist, this school is dah, dah, dah, then they would not fit that family. Short of allowing terrorists into the institution, I would want to have a pretty serious conversation with the parents and the student about that. It has never arisen but, I mean come on, that is pretty common, I would say that is pretty ... I hope that would be...

Deputy M. Tadier:

Can we move on to question 4? I think Mr. Beirne has, effectively, answered it earlier and I suspect Mr. Turner is itching to answer it, but it is to do with what avenues, other than suspensions, are available to you, specifically in your school, and what you would do to try and avoid suspensions and exemptions.

The Head of De La Salle College:

Of course. Are we going to skip question 3?

Deputy M. Tadier:

I think ... not necessarily skip but we will certainly ... as soon as we have done 4, we will let you answer it then.

The Head of De La Salle College:

Okay, if you wish. I think there are 3 questions, actually, contained in question 3, so would you indulge me if I go through them sequentially?

Deputy M. Tadier:

Fine, if you wish.

The Head of De La Salle College:

Thank you. I think, if we look at the very first question; what avenues are available to schools other than suspension? Now, obviously, you will understand that my experience in Jersey is only at De La Salle and so I can only comment, really, on the avenues that are open to us in my own community. So, first of all, I think that we place a very strong emphasis on positive reinforcement of desired behaviour so, as I have mentioned before, from the first preliminary interview, the boys are told exactly what we expect of them. Those very clear standards, I think, help the boys know the limits within which they can operate. Where poor behaviour has happened, we have an active pastoral team and these pastoral staff are trained in managing to resolve particular issues or particular behaviour problems, but the first thing that member of staff would do to the student would be to identify exactly what aspect of their behaviour is of concern to us, so that the boy is very clear of exactly why we are concerned. Whatever the type of behaviour that has concerned us, and I would refer back to, I think, a previous comment that the Director made, we would immediately inform parents because without that parental support, which I am blessed to enjoy, it would be much more difficult for us to solve a particular problem. So the parents are informed on the day that the poor behaviour has happened. Then we have a multi-layered reward and sanction policy and I think that multi-layered approach, again, enables us to, rather than just have a, if you like, knee jerk reaction: "You have done this. This will be the consequence" it is far more tailored to the individual. Then when we have identified, if you like, the poor behaviour, we try and build in a way in which the individual can redeem himself, can help our community and then straight away by putting that element of redemption into a student's reaction, we have found a way where we can actively praise them. That may be something as simple as saying: "Okay, well, you know, you have behaved inappropriately. What we want you to do is at lunchtime we are going to ask you referee a touch rugby game for the year 7 students." Now, straight away for that year 9 student, he is in a positive environment. Those younger boys just feel that this is wonderful; they have the attention of an older student who is going to take time and teach them their skills and immediately we are able to turn what is a negative situation, an example of poor behaviour, into a very positive, affirming situation. I think that is one of the ways in which we would initially try to avoid a suspension; catch the situation of the poor behaviour at a relatively low level, immediately use our trained pastoral staff to initiate a way in which that young man can be turned to look at a positive way in which he contributes to our community. Can I take a pause there and perhaps allow Mr. Beirne to leap in on that one?

Deputy T.M. Pitman:

I must just say that I know we have dwelled on some questions quite a lot, but we are running out of

time, so if you would like to comment, please do.

The Head of Beaulieu Convent School:

I will quickly give you my ... I have got a marvellous Director of Pastoral Services and, as you would expect, I sent her a few questions and said: "Help me out here", I mean, most of us do that. She just suggests to me that certainly the things that we do at Beaulieu, to answer question 4, goes without saying: communication with parents and students; individual pastoral support programmes; use of mentors also to enable a bit more individual approach. She says I may have to explain the mentor system; well I have done that, I hope. Focus on individual students' strengths and interests; engaging students in suitable projects; temporarily dis-applying the students from continuous situations, problems with peers; students keeping up with Learning Support Unit during social times. This specific unit is staffed all day, from sunrise to sunset, and, in particular, agencies, where necessary, working with the school ... we will quite often get called by an agency, or even the police, on an ongoing investigation related to something we keep confidential, where they ask us to work with them. We call case conferences. I mean the same practices which you would expect to be seeing in U.K. best practice.

Deputy T.M. Pitman:

Thanks. Do you have any other questions, anyone, because time is running out?

Professor P. Munn:

Sorry, just a very quick question, which is; Both of you have talked and emphasised very much that pupils are not admitted on the basis of ability, but on ability to pay and I understand that. Would you admit pupils with special educational needs? Someone who had emotional or behavioural difficulties, for example, would you ...? I am just trying to get a flavour of your school population.

The Head of Beaulieu Convent School:

Sure. Five years ago, I would have said no. I would have said that the school was not equipped to do so. I mean, we are talking some pretty severe emotional needs here. As a result of a project that we have put forward to the Fiscal Stimulus Panel, to the support we want to share with the challenge that Jersey faces in some of these areas, we believe we can make a contribution because we see it as part of our mission and purpose. The school was originally a hospital for people in Jersey before we had hospitals and we believe that that care should continue. Yes, the answer to that is I have recently agreed to take on a student for whom, otherwise, it would impossible to educate in a school environment. It is a risk. It is a risk to my school community, which needs educating. It did not just happen. I put it through a scrutiny of 3 colleagues, including my chaplain, counsellor and the educational psychologists. We have looked at this particular case, we have shared it with the senior management team - not necessarily all of the detail - a deal of training and structures need to be put into place to ensure that this girl has the opportunity to be able to be in the environment in which she will be, and underlying that was a safety net. So I needed the ability to be sure that if this failed or did not work, the child would not suddenly find herself out on the street, that there were other options. With all of those criteria being met, I felt safe to make the offer. Why? Because it is like adoption. You do not take a child on for Christmas, you take them on for life and if you are going to do that you take it that seriously. So, I hope that gives you a flavour.

Professor P. Munn:

That is very helpful. Thank you.

Deputy T.M. Pitman:

Do you have any other questions?

Deputy M. Tadier:

I think, very briefly, if you can just crystallise some wise words for us. Obviously we are looking at the suspension policies and the way it is applied right across the board, particularly in the public sector. Are there any words you could give us, sort of a recommendation as to ...?

The Head of Beaulieu Convent School:

God help you [Laughter]. No. Can that be struck off, that one? Jason?

The Head of De La Salle College:

No, no. Do carry on.

The Director of Education, Sport and Culture:

Could I just make 2 points?

Deputy T.M. Pitman:

Yes. If you are very quick.

The Director of Education, Sport and Culture:

Yes, it will be. The first point is you will be aware, and hopefully we would be able to tell you more about it before you produce your report, that there are a very small number of children who sometimes we struggle to meet their needs in any of our facilities, whether the main stream or special. So we are seeking to open, very soon, a very small provision for a maximum of 6 children who might fall in that category. So you might want to look at that a little bit later. The other is around a point of process, with all due respect to Mr. Beirne, but there are a couple of case studies that you have heard about today, and some of the details concern me that, within the small community that we are, those children could be identified. So you, as a panel, may wish to consider how you handle that in the publication of your transcript.

Deputy T.M. Pitman:

Of course, we certainly will.

The Head of Beaulieu Convent School:

I apologise if I have said something there that was ... it has not been my intention to raise any issues for children, but to help you and I support the Director's view there. If there is anything you can do to mitigate the identification of individual students, I would be deeply grateful. I will give you a quote, as you have asked for one, I would say that good discipline must be at the heart of the education system, but this is as much the responsibility of the parents as it is the teachers and head teachers.

Deputy T.M. Pitman:

Can I ask you one final, very quick, question and you might feel it is not appropriate because you do not seem to have the problem with suspensions, but in the light of a suspension, or even an expulsion, if a parent was unhappy with that final decision where is their route of appeal because, obviously, you are different to the state schools; how does that work for you both?

The Head of Beaulieu Convent School:

If it were to happen, we have an appeals process through the Board of Governors. If that were to not be achieved and there was dissatisfaction, we also have a Board of Trustees. So, it would go through that process. It has never happened, but if it were to happen we have a forum and a process to enable parents to have that.

Deputy T.M. Pitman:

Mr. Turner?

The Head of De La Salle College:

If there were a suspension taking place then on the letter it is laid out for the parents to see that there is an appeals process. Although the decision is mine and mine alone, they may appeal to my Board of Governors. Now, precisely because the decision is mine, my Board of Governors is not involved in that process and so we have a panel and that panel would review the evidence that has led me to make my decision and, at that point, they would either validate my decision or they would say that they believe, with the weight of evidence, that my decision was wrong. If they chose to validate that decision, then the parents would have a further right of appeal and that right of appeal would be to another panel of the governing body who have not yet considered the evidence and have not spoken to me. That panel would have the final decision. They would again go through the whole process. They would review the evidence that I had. Of course both myself and the parents and the student involved would be able to talk to the panel, but when they make their decision, whether to confirm the suspension or not, that decision would be final.

Deputy T.M. Pitman:

Thank you.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Thank you very much.

Deputy T.M. Pitman:

Sorry; we have over ... sorry.

[12:00]

The Head of Beaulieu Convent School:

Sorry. I would say that the issue you have raised there is an important one and it is worth considering and it is, in fact, not just the process but after the process, the reinstatement of students as a result of the process is probably one of the most contentious issues seen in the United Kingdom provision. I would not be surprised if it were the same here and that can cause significant issues within schools, even school staff threatening strike action, as they did in the case in 2002 with the Glyn Technology College in the U.K., which resulted in the student not being able to go back to the school, but had to find another school elsewhere. So, the question of re-integration is as important as the appeal process.

Deputy T.M. Pitman:

In thanking you for coming, can I just say that if there is anything - and we have, perhaps missed out a couple of things - you think of that is really important, could you just drop that to Sam, any thoughts that you might think are relevant to us, if it is something particularly important.

The Head of Beaulieu Convent School:

I am happy to leave with the responses to the other questions from my Director of Pastoral Services. They are brief; they are notes.

Deputy T.M. Pitman:

Thank you very much for coming.