

4.7 Deputy G.P. Southern of the Minister for Education regarding appointments to specialist posts in secondary school teaching:

Given the shortage of candidates for teaching qualifications in the U.K. and a consequent shortage of newly-qualified teachers, will the Minister state what measures he has under consideration or in place to enable appointments to be made to secondary specialist posts in Jersey and will he further state how many teachers are engaged locally teaching G.C.S.E. (General Certificate of Secondary Education) and A. (Advanced) level classes in subjects other than their specialist subject?

Deputy R.G. Bryans of St. Helier (The Minister for Education):

The Deputy has asked this question before but I am happy to assure the Assembly of the steps we are taking and how we are addressing this problem; we are very proactive in this area. We have a 4-pronged approach. We train local graduates to be teachers, a successful scheme that has produced more than 60 teachers for our secondary schools. We recruit direct from universities. Four science specialists have come to Jersey from Newcastle University and are working in our schools currently. We are now working with the same university recruiting for maths teachers. We are reviewing how and where we recruit teachers, and will be using more social media, targeting areas around transport hubs and airports. We recently made a short film advert. In future, if plans to restructure pay are agreed in negotiations, we should be able to redirect some funds to offer financial incentives to teachers in shortage areas. We do not have information about teachers working outside their specialist subject. This changes from week to week. It is not unusual for people to teach a second subject. It is in the gift of the head teachers to make choices about which staff are best placed to deliver the best education in the school.

4.7.1 Deputy G.P. Southern:

If I may, this is the standard answer that the Minister for Education gives me every time I ask this question. Will he now return to the House with figures that show how many A. Level and G.C.S.E. classes are being taught by non-specialists? Will he seek that answer from his head teachers and return to the House with those numbers, because he keeps saying this, that it is the responsibility of his head teachers. It is not; it is the responsibility of the Minister for Education to ensure that specialisms are taught by specialists and that is one of the ways we can get good results. Will he return to the House with those figures?

Deputy R.G. Bryans:

I have not been asked this particular part of the question before. I have already answered it in the last part of what I stated, but it is important that the Assembly understand that it is the heads of the schools who have the autonomy to choose what their teachers teach in their particular areas. I have already stated that we are looking to recruit directly from universities in specialist areas.

4.7.2 Deputy G.P. Southern:

Is that a yes or a no? I am not clear on that. Will he return to the House? It is not week on week, it is term on term. This term, how many non-specialists have been thrown into a specialist class?

Deputy R.G. Bryans:

There are no teachers that are thrown into classes. Everything done is deliberate and with a great amount of professionalism and expertise. Currently, I have asked the heads to provide some information but at the moment the information is not available, so the answer is no.

4.7.3 Deputy A.D. Lewis:

Could the Minister advise as to whether any retraining goes on with his cohort of teachers so that they can teach specialist subjects? Once they are in-post, is there training that goes on so they can retrain to teach in a specific area and does the department fund that?

Deputy R.G. Bryans:

There is retraining done, if necessary. It is important for the Assembly to understand that we attempt, wherever we can, to address this problem. We recognise it is a massive problem in the U.K. I was looking at the latest Department for Education figures in England, their latest figures for teacher recruitment, which show some signs of improvement. As the U.K. improves in their figures so, hopefully, we will do the same. Deputy Lewis is quite right; we need to look at the retraining of individuals. At the drop-in session last Friday I spoke to one individual who is coming out of the civil service and has decided he wants a career in teaching; I will do everything to support those kinds of initiatives.

4.7.4 Deputy K.C. Lewis:

Just prior to the summer recess, I did ask the Minister for Education a question regarding a proposal to reduce the wages of newly-qualified teachers by £11,000. The answer given was that there was a surplus in the U.K. and this was now the going rate. Deputy Southern informs us there is now a shortage of newly-qualified teachers. Would the Minister please give an account?

Deputy R.G. Bryans:

I am not quite sure what the question is, but I think what Deputy Lewis is referring to, and let me just clarify one issue: it was not £11,000 it was £8,000. It was mis-reported in the *J.E.P. (Jersey Evening Post)*. Currently, we are paying newly-qualified teachers somewhere in the region of between £35,000 and £38,000. The consideration is that we would look, again working with the unions, again discussing it with everybody concerned, to reduce that by around £8,000. This is still well above the U.K. rate of pay for newly-qualified teachers, which is around £22,000 to £23,000.

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

The question was not answered. Is there a surplus or is there a shortage?

Deputy R.G. Bryans:

At the moment there is no shortage within our own schools but there is definitely a shortage in the U.K.

4.7.5 Deputy G.P. Southern:

The answer I have is: "No; I shall be asking some questions of my head teachers." I will try and be specific and let us see if we can get a yes or no out of this. Will the Minister return to this House with numbers indicating how many non-specialist teachers are teaching G.C.S.E. and A. level specialist teaching classes, in his service?

Deputy R.G. Bryans:

If that information is available from the heads, I will certainly give it to the Deputy.

4.7.6 Deputy G.P. Southern:

No ifs or buts; will he ask his head teachers to supply those figures to him, and therefore to us? We need to know what is going on.

Deputy R.G. Bryans:

As I said before, I will request it of the head teachers. If that information is available, I will pass it on to the Deputy.