

23.06.13

8 Deputy R.S. Kovacs of the Minister for Children and Education regarding the provision of PE (Physical Education) in Government primary schools (OQ.110/2023)

Will the Minister state whether there are 8 government primary schools which receive their P.E. (physical education) lessons through Jersey Sport and, if so, why there are not more? Will she further explain why P.E. in these 8 schools is not delivered through usual school classes and involves the use of external members of staff?

Deputy I. Gardiner (The Minister for Children and Education):

Thank you, Deputy, for your question. I can confirm there are currently 8 government primary schools which receive physical education lessons through Jersey Sport, where the headteachers have made the decision to use their services. These schools vary in size and the fact is they tend to lead to this decision related to professional expertise. The number of schools associated with Jersey Sport can fluctuate on an annual basis, depending on the need of the schools and some schools are beginning to seek to make their own appointments. These appointments are guided by the qualifications recommended in the Association for Physical Education Safety Guidance. In 2022 there were 9 schools and this academic year there are 8 schools involved. The numbers for 2023/2024 are not yet confirmed. Each school that decided to employ Jersey Sport as their provider has an individual service level agreement in place between headteacher and Jersey Sport. This is because the terms can vary from a day a week to full-time position. Circumstances are different and may vary year to year. These are the reasons that the service level agreements with Jersey Sport are reviewed annually.

3.8.1 Deputy R.S. Kovacs:

I have been informed that this is left to the latitude of the headteacher to decide if any at all of the physical education is given in school and the U.K. and other jurisdictions have this as part of the school curriculum. Does the Minister consider looking into making that a regular activity in each school?

Deputy I. Gardiner:

Thank you for the follow-up question. First of all, we have now the Curriculum Council working together with Jersey Sport to look into the physical literacy and to see how we are bringing the expertise from Jersey Sport into the curriculum.

[10:45]

It is also important to emphasise that the primary school teachers that usually train as generalists, at the same time each teacher has their own passion, their own specialisation specification. In some schools there are teachers that are very passionate about sport and they work together and they do not feel that they need to bring in the specialists because they have somebody at school. In some schools you have somebody who is a specialist in art. It really depends on what is the requirement and what is the makeup of the staff within the school. What is important when Jersey Sport come into schools they do provide not just a lesson, they can also provide the training and teachers can watch and learn to make sure that it is implemented through the school.

The Bailiff:

I will have to, I think, going forward restrict the number of supplemental questions and, in other words, call the list sooner because we are running out of time to deal with the questions on the Order Paper.

3.8.2 Deputy R.J. Ward:

May I ask the Minister, what is the payment arrangements for these services from Jersey Sport? Is a payment made to Jersey Sport from the school budget?

Deputy I. Gardiner:

Yes, this is the payment arrangements going from the school budget towards Jersey Sport. It is contracted by Jersey Sport and they are employees of Jersey Sport.

3.8.3 Deputy R.J. Ward:

We have a situation where an arm's length government-funded organisation is being paid by a government-funded school to provide a service for P.E. Is that cheaper than employing a fully qualified P.E. teacher in the schools and is that one of the reasons why this decision is being made by primary heads in order to save money?

Deputy I. Gardiner:

I would say that, first of all, we do have supply teachers and we are paying for supply teachers when we need the teachers within the school. I would not go that Jersey Sport professional coaches are cheaper than the qualified teacher. It depends if you have the teacher, that newly qualified teacher which will cost less than the qualified teacher after 10 years' experience, which will be paid more. I believe that it is about the headteacher making a decision on what is right for the team. Also, we need to consider when the Jersey Sport coaches deliver the coaching, the teachers can do other things, which we are talking about the teachers' workload and other things. Every headteacher is making the arrangements which are suitable for the teaching; this is the autonomy.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

I am sorry, can I just confirm whether the Minister was saying that Jersey Sport being paid the same as ... because I did ask whether it compares with P.E. teachers, are they being paid the same rates that a teacher would be paid?

The Bailiff:

I am sorry, Deputy, I am afraid that is a further development in the question you asked and I do not think I will allow that.

3.8.4 Deputy M. Tadier:

What consultation was there with teaching unions before these decisions were made to engage Jersey Sport instead of what we might call ordinary teachers?

Deputy I. Gardiner:

I am not sure that I can confirm this because it is the decision that was left to the headteachers. I personally did not receive ... any concern has not been raised with me, not by the unions, not by the teachers. If there is any difficulty I think that unions ... unions met with my officers, unions met with me, if there are any concerns - the arrangements are publicly known - it would be raised with me I

assume and if there are any concerns I am happy to address them if it will be brought to my attention.

3.8.5 Deputy M. Tadier:

It seems to me that this should worry the Minister more. She does not seem to know whether any engagement with the unions happened. Is she not concerned that this sets a precedent, that you have, potentially, Jersey students and others go to university, do a P.G.C.E. (Postgraduate Certificate in Education), specialise in sport and P.E. and they come back to Jersey and find that there are not any jobs for them because they have all been outsourced to Jersey Sport, possibly to save money but the Minister is not sure because she cannot provide us with those figures? Will the Minister answer that question about precedent? Will she undertake to give the evidence like for like in terms of cost, as well as whether the unions have been consulted?

Deputy I. Gardiner:

Okay. I think that I have found information about the cost, to make sure that I address the cost issue as it is. The rate that coaches received in 2023 it is £20 an hour. The newly qualified teachers' salary is £39,000 a year, which is approximately £23.50 an hour. If the teacher was experienced obviously will earn more. What is more important is that we have plenty of vacancies; we have vacancies for the teaching. The moment that we would have a teacher, the teacher would be employed. Again, when we are looking into the primary schools, within the primary schools you have a primary teacher to each class; that I said they are usually generalists. Where you have an option, where you have a specialist in P.E. this school use this specialist to make sure that all teachers are trained. But when you have specialists in other subjects but not in P.E. you need to bring the expertise, and Jersey Sport is bringing this expertise to the school. This is the reason that we start to work together with the Curriculum Council to make sure that you have the same offer with schools for their physical education.

3.8.6 Deputy G.P. Southern:

I am still not totally clear as to whether the staff who deliver through P.E. lessons through Jersey Sport are qualified teachers or not.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

Can I ask, please, Deputy to repeat the question?

The Bailiff:

The question is those who deliver teaching through Jersey Sport, are they qualified teachers?

Deputy I. Gardiner:

They are not qualified teachers, they are qualified coaches. What they have is sport expertise and qualification in physical education. Also, we have monitoring. When you have a school review they are watched, as any other teacher, to ensure that the level of the delivery are meeting the skill standards. They all have the various in-house checks, so they are professionals in physical education but they are not qualified teachers.

3.8.7 Deputy R.S. Kovacs:

As mentioned before, that Jersey primary schools on the physical education are following the U.K. curriculum where currently it is compulsory within their school curriculum these lessons to be given through the school teachers. But here we have it is left to the latitude of the teachers to opt in or

out and given also the fact that Government promotes an active and healthy lifestyle and it is in the process of developing a sporting strategy, does the Minister commit in working with the Curriculum Council and with the Minister for Economic Development Tourism, Sport and Culture in finding the appropriate way for each primary school, not just those 8, to have access to a qualified physical education teacher?

Deputy I. Gardiner:

Thank you, again, for raising this because I have asked already the Curriculum Council to address exactly the same point to making sure this is happening, so the work is in progress.