

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION
BY DEPUTY R.J. WARD OF ST. HELIER
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 21st JANUARY 2020**

Question

What action, if any, is being taken to prevent schools from developing a culture of ‘review readiness’ in the new Jersey Schools Review Framework and to avoid increasing levels of stress, workloads and pressure on staff?

Answer

The following barriers are in place to prevent any sense of preparing for a review:

School improvement is difficult work and takes time and certainly cannot be achieved a few weeks before a review. We are not interested in ‘quick fixes’ because we genuinely want the school to improve and putting on some sort of show and then returning to normality after the review team have completed the review is contrary to everything we believe.

All schools are given 4 days’ notice before a review. Previously, we informed schools two weeks in advance but we have listened to professionals and Unions about the potential risk of ‘review preparation’ and additional anxiety placed on all school staff.

We need to see how the school really functions so that we can identify what is working well and what needs to improve. Trying to ‘short-circuit’ this by presenting a false picture of the school will be quickly identified by the reviewers of the school.

We are judging schools over a period of time. For example, we look at the GCSE performance data over three years and not just one year. Thus, it would be impossible to ‘prepare’ for such an event a few weeks before the review. We are looking at the impact of changes that have taken place within the school and, again, this takes time. For example, if a school writes a Teaching and Learning Policy, the implementation of it is ongoing and will take approx. 18-24 months. You could not write such a policy and fully implement and embed it across the school in a few weeks.

Senior Advisers fully understand because they have been told that they must not ‘prepare’ schools for a review.

School staff can complete a survey during the review and have a comment box where they can raise concerns. Thus far, the issue of preparing for a review has not been raised by teaching staff.

All headteachers will be reminded at the next Primary and Secondary Headteachers’ Meetings that they must not try to prepare for a review because it is pointless and will have little impact other than cause anxiety among the staff.