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Headteacher: Colin C Masterman B.Ed (Hons.)

"Excellence for all - the best from all"

8.6.2007

Deputy F J Hill BEM
Chairman
Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel

Dear Deputy Hill,

In response to your letter of 16th May 2007 I would like to offer the following perspective.

As a provider of care and education for 3 to 4 year olds, it is my duty to nurture the children at Mont Nicolle School Nursery as learners. As such, I encourage children to: think for themselves and act independently, feel confident in themselves and their own ability, be actively involved and interested in the people and environment surrounding them, become risk takers and *do* rather than always being told, and to manage their own time and space in order to learn at length and depth. To allow this to happen it is vital to create a sense that the children are joint stakeholders in a learning community; that they can trust and depend on each other to be each other's critics and supporters. Children need time with each other to build trusting relationships and they need a consistent ethos to form a joint vision of what it is to be a learner within a learning community. It is crucial to the Island's learning agenda and future success that we value our youngest learners as competent and able members of our society and I would therefore urge all decision makers to take a long term view of the impact this review will have on Jersey's future.

I further believe that there is a task ahead in educating parents as a whole as to the real nature of early years "education" in comparison to childcare. I do not believe they are necessarily the same thing, but there is a lot of anecdotal evidence to suggest that working parents simply want a "place" for their child, almost regardless of the nature of that placement, because it facilitates work. I believe it is the Islands best interests to ensure that if all children receive an entitlement provision, then it is of the best possible "educational" quality.

Finally, as a society I have to call into question the price we are paying, and will have to pay, for placing many children in to wrap around and extended day arrangements because our skewed economy requires households to have dual incomes to survive, when actually children ought to be spending more time in the care of their families. It cannot be right or acceptable, however good the provision, for so many children to be placed into breakfast club at 8, then on to school for 08:45 then into an after school club until 5:30 or 6 o'clock, five days a week. In a civilised society, the children's needs are always put first.

Yours sincerely,

Colin Masterman
Headteacher