



OFFICIAL REPORT

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STATES OF GUERNSEY

SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT

COMMITTEE

Response of the Committee *for* Education, Sport
& Culture to the COVID-19 pandemic –
Public Hearing

HANSARD

Guernsey, Tuesday, 28th July 2020

No. 4/2020

*Further information relating to the Scrutiny Management Committee
can be found on the official States of Guernsey website at www.gov.gg/scrutiny*

Members Present:

Panel Chair: Deputy Chris Green, President,
Deputy Jennifer Merrett, Member,
Mrs Gill Morris, non-States member,
Scrutiny Management Committee

Mr Mark Huntington, Principal Scrutiny Officer

Business transacted

Procedural – Remit of the Committee	3
EVIDENCE OF Deputy Matthew Fallaize, President,.....	3
Committee for Education, Sport & Culture; Mr Nick Hynes, Head of Inclusion and Services for Children and Schools; Ms Sophie Roughsedge, Business Change Manager, Transforming Education.....	3
<i>The Committee adjourned.</i>	23

Scrutiny Management Committee

Response of the Committee *for* Education, Sport & Culture to the COVID-19 pandemic – Public Hearing

*The Committee met at 3.50 p.m.
in the Cambridge Room, Beau Sejour*

[DEPUTY GREEN *in the Chair*]

Procedural – Remit of the Committee

The Chairman (Deputy Green): Right, okay, shall we crack on?

Just to confirm there will be a *Hansard* transcript of these proceedings, everything is being recorded.

The intention very much this afternoon is to try to be constructive in terms of trying to identify
5 where the lessons learnt are from the handling of the COVID-19 pandemic obviously specifically
from the Education, Sport & Culture point of view.

If any members of the public have got their mobile phones can they just make sure they are on silent?

EVIDENCE OF Deputy Matthew Fallaize, President, Committee for Education, Sport & Culture; Mr Nick Hynes, Head of Inclusion and Services for Children and Schools; Ms Sophie Roughsedge, Business Change Manager, Transforming Education

10 **The Chairman:** So could we start with introductions with the panel, from this end, please?

Ms Roughsedge: My name is Sophie Roughsedge and I am Business Change Manager for the Transforming Education Programme.

15 **Deputy Fallaize:** Matt Fallaize, President Education, Sport & Culture.

Mr Hynes: Nick Hynes, Head of Inclusion and Support Services – it is the wrong one on there; I am just reading it off here! Head of Inclusion and Services for Children and Schools.

The Chairman: Lovely, thank you very much.

20 Shall I start with you, Deputy Fallaize? Would it be fair to say that COVID-19 has caused considerable disruption to Education Services on the Island; and do you worry about what harm that might cause going forward? Or how do you see it?

25 **Deputy Fallaize:** I think the logistical effects were considerable. We are educating a great many children, thousands of children with hundreds of staff, and as a result of the Island going into lockdown inevitably that was going to have a significant logistical impact. So the impacts range from, just to highlight a few areas: the new inspection arrangements for schools have been deferred because that relies on getting people across from England; there have been some recruitment challenges because the whole basis of recruitment across the public sector has changed; and
30 obviously monitoring and supporting vulnerable children is harder remotely. There were all those kinds of concerns.

On the other hand we were able to, I think, largely mitigate the more serious effects. If you consider what has happened in England and compare it to here, we had schools ... Not closed, because they were not closed completely, but obviously a greatly reduced number of children. So
35 most children were not in school for a half a term and then we were able to get all children back at once. So that was advantageous.

The distance-learning package we feel was reasonably successful, or as successful as it could have been. We had a survey of parents during the period which showed very high levels of satisfaction in terms of the level of work being set, the amount of work being set and the information
40 that schools were making available to parents and children. We had what we considered very high levels of engagement from children in schoolwork, completing all or at least some of their work; and we had quite impressive – and Nick can explain more about this – engagement from children who we identify as vulnerable, which I think has been a particular challenge in other jurisdictions.

So the impacts are considerable. But I think compared to where we might have feared that we
45 would be at the start of lockdown, generally speaking we were able to mitigate the more serious effects.

The Chairman: Okay, and what do you think the real lessons from the lockdown experience are for Education?
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Deputy Fallaize: Well, I mean, I guess that –

The Chairman: Is it too early to say, or can we identify some?

55 **Deputy Fallaize:** To some extent it is too early to say. In terms of effects on, for example, public exam results, obviously we have a sense of what the effect might be but it is too early to say until we have some statistical evidence. But the main lesson learnt – and I suppose everybody who you have interviewed has said this – would be around pandemic planning.

We had two weeks extended school holiday right at the start of lockdown, and then the Easter holiday, and that was simply because we had to provide our staff and school leaders and teachers
60 with an opportunity to prepare materials and prepare the distance-learning package. If this happens again, if we have to go back into earlier phases we will be more practised at it and we will be able to roll it out more quickly.

65 **The Chairman:** Ms Roughsedge, from your point of view, what would you say are the main lessons learnt from the educational experience of lockdown? Are there some very clear ones?

Ms Roughsedge: Yes, I was involved with the operation TCG-side of things so I think one of the really good lessons learnt was actually around the ability for people to work across Committees
70 really quickly, really efficiently by being all brought together with a clear mandate –

The Chairman: TCG? Just remind me what that means.

75 **Ms Roughsedge:** The Tactical Coordinating Group, that sits below the Strategic and then feeding up to CCA as well. I think one of the big lessons was actually around everyone's adaptability to change and being able to completely change ways of working overnight, both within the Education Department and through officers; but also for the schools, and all school staff were having to work in a very different way.

80 **The Chairman:** Deputy Merrett.

Deputy Merrett: Did all students have access to the equipment they required, including access to Wi-Fi? Were plans put in place to ensure *all* students had the opportunity to participate?

85 **Ms Roughsedge:** Yes, the schools were really proactive in identifying students and families that did not have the right Wi-Fi access – for example, for some it was around broadband Wi-Fi and for others it was actually about appropriate devices. So maybe it would have worked over the phone, rather than an actual device to work on.

90 So, yes, we loaned out equipment to all families that needed them, and similarly Wi-Fi access was put in place for those families as well.

The Chairman: Do we know what percentage of children were not able to access remote learning? Or were not able to access it effectively?

95 Mr Hynes?

Mr Hynes: Yes. At the beginning of the lockdown we were tracking, effectively, across a whole six-week period to see the experiences of children and young people as they were accessing distance learning, and by the end of week six we had less than 2% of children who were not accessing, at some point, the distance-learning packages that had been put in place.

100 What was impressive I think from working closely together with schools was that, unlike the experiences in England that they had where access to distance learning, if they had it in place at all, has gone down, the access to learning in the experience of our schools actually increased because of the bespoke packages of support, and the follow-up that we were providing with children and families when we were seeing that they were not accessing learning of any description.

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The Chairman: Right. Mrs Morris?

Mrs Morris: Which age group or year groups do you think coped best with distance learning?

110 **Mr Hynes:** We had a high percentage of children actually attending school. So by the end of week six there were over 50% of all our children with special educational needs who were actually attending, because we wanted to make a real effort to make sure that those children and families could be supported, where some of those young people with really quite complex needs could access what they needed during that period of time. So our special needs school stayed open the whole time and ranged from 30% to 50% actual attendance at schools.

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Secondary school staff and secondary school pupils, I think, coped better with the access to distance learning. Certainly the feedback we have had from parents showed that although all the young people who were accessing the schools managed to have a broadly positive experience, secondary school young people attended less but accessed distance learning as much as primary.

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Mrs Morris: I was not going to ask this question but this is for the teenagers: do you think there is a lesson learnt there about the fact that teenagers learn better after 10 o'clock in the morning?

125 **Mr Hynes:** I have teenagers myself and I must say that trying to get two teenagers up for the half-past-seven bus is not the most pleasurable experience.

I think it does. Obviously we are here to talk about the lessons learnt and what we might do differently, we were talking previously about there is a definite view that you could look at the mix between different aspects of online learning as well as different starts to the day moving forward, but that is something which we need to take a better view of, I think, as we move forward out of –

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Mrs Morris: Well, I was being a bit wicked. I have got some more serious questions!

Deputy Fallaize: I think is worth referring to the parent survey that was done. (**The Chairman:** Yes, okay.) Because I think these were really quite encouraging results. We asked parents their level of satisfaction and their children's level of engagement with distance learning. In the secondary phase 96% of parents said that their children were accessing all, or almost all, or some learning. In the primary sector it was 98%.

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When we asked them about the level of challenge, whether they were satisfied with the challenge of the work, 84% in the secondary sector felt it was about right, and 89% in the primary sector. In terms of the frequency of communication from school to home, in the secondary sector 74% said it was right and in the primary it was 90%.

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I think those figures, if we had been advised at the start that we could get to those kinds of figures after a few weeks, we would have been quite pleased about that.

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Deputy Merrett: My concern is whether you were asking the right people? That is the parents' response there, but did you ask the students or the teachers of what satisfaction *they* had? The parents' perception, when they are told, 'Yes, I have done my work, Mum/Dad' – might not actually be reality on occasion, I am led to believe. So have you got the same results for students and for teachers?

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Deputy Fallaize: We have not done a student survey, but obviously the students' work was being monitored by their teachers. The level of commitment from teachers was quite extraordinary. Some of them were in school and the class teachers and subject teachers in secondary were in frequent communication with their students. There were a lot of students, or most students were receiving quite a lot of feedback. So we have that experience to draw on. We have not carried out a survey of children's experiences.

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Deputy Merrett: Teachers?

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Deputy Fallaize: Teachers have just worked extremely hard and pulled out all the stops to make sure that students' experiences were as positive as they could be. I am sure that there are some parents who would report a less than satisfactory experience, but generally speaking I think teachers have done a fantastic job in protecting children's experiences during what could have been a really difficult and chaotic time.

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The Chairman: Is there any evidence that remote learning was *not* a positive experience for particular groups? I am thinking of particular ages or particular parts of the socio-economic spectrum, possibly? Is there any evidence of that?

Mr Hynes?

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Mr Hynes: I think it is fair to say that some groups of young people and families who we might consider to be more vulnerable, they required more support to access some of that learning – which is why we worked really closely with our colleagues in HSC to follow up individual young people and families on a daily basis, to see whether they were able to access the learning and to see whether they needed support. Also, we invited some of those children and young people into school

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if we thought the family was finding it difficult to support that learning in the home, which is why our numbers of attendance over the period of time actually rose, because we recognised that some families possibly were struggling with some if the access to learning and the circumstances they found themselves in.

180 Sophie said earlier on about the equipment that we put out. During this period of time we actually loaned out over 300 different Chromebooks and equipment to young people and managed to get up 91 different Wi-Fi connections for families to ensure that they had that ability to access as well.

185 **Mrs Morris:** Do you think there are particular age groups – I am thinking possibly Reception and Year 1 – where it was just *really* hard for all parties concerned to actually deliver systems there?

190 **Mr Hynes:** I think the data that the President was referring to before, certainly we did ask one of the questions which was about the amount of support that family members needed to put in with regard to making sure that their young people could access. It will not be a surprise to know that from Reception up until Year 11 there is a picture of Reception children needing up to 74% support to access the learning, and then down to 8% needing support in Year 11. So there is a picture that the younger you are the more support you might need to access that learning at home, yes.

195 **Mrs Morris:** Is there a danger that there are some gaps in key skills that really should be identified and filled going forward?

I know Matt said that actually we might not know for a while on exams, but I am just thinking that there are some specific skills that smaller children need and we might not find that those gaps exist for another couple of years. Is something being done to make sure that does not happen?

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205 **Mr Hynes:** I think the curriculum we have, especially around the early years, is really well placed to identify where those gaps are if they exist; and the support, making sure the children who may have gaps in those different areas and different skills are supported, is already in place. (**Mrs Morris:** Right.) Certainly the Early Years curriculum is very much based around those experiences about communication, about language development and about physical development, which are there anyway. Certainly the distance-learning models that were put in place for children and young people who are in Reception, or certainly within the early years, were more project-based experiences around making sure that interaction and communication could still take place as part of their distance-learning module. It was not necessarily worksheets and doing a piece of work, it was experiences to do with their parents or adults when they were able to.

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215 **Mrs Morris:** It has just occurred to me that the survey you did, did you collect data about how many children the parents were looking after? I am thinking, I have an only, and actually supporting her was not that difficult, but if I had four under 10 I think that might have been a real challenge. Did you see that reflected in the results?

220 **Deputy Fallaize:** I do not think that we broke the results down into number of children per parent, but clearly the more children you are trying to guide through learning at home the more challenging it is. Yes, I think there are some challenges when you are in this kind of situation which cannot be overcome; and children who were not vulnerable or the children of key workers, were not in school. So the more children that you have at home, I think it would inevitably be more challenging.

225 But, nevertheless, these levels of satisfaction are still quite encouraging because if you take 81% of parents, a lot of those parents will have more than one school-aged child. So it certainly is not the case that this was tolerable for parents with one child and not for other parents. But I think it stands to reason that the more children you have the more challenging it would be.

230 **Deputy Merrett:** So if we take that comment on board, Deputy Fallaize, could consideration be given to households with multiple minors when one member of that household, one of the carers or parents could have in fact have been an essential or critical worker, so therefore they were unable to access or go to school? That is my understanding.

235 So could a learning point potentially be that if we go back into the scenario, that actually they needed more flexibility about whether both parents or carers are essential workers or not, especially if as you just said yourself, your belief is there are homes that contain multiple children of various ages. I mean, if we assume that is already the possibility, I do not understand why ...

Or if there was flexibility around that, I am not aware of it.

240 **Ms Roughsedge:** The decisions around which children could attend school were actually guided by Public Health. So, because we were in the pandemic and we were in the very early stages of community seeding, part of the rationale as I understand it was around reducing contact across the Island. So I think that was one of the reasons why they reduced the numbers of children who could access school to prevent community spreading of the illness.

245 I think that actually we would always have to be guided by Public Health moving forward on those kinds of decisions.

250 **Mrs Morris:** But surely there has to be a balance between Public Health *and* the child's health? So if you had evidence to say ... Or you had some lessons learnt where you thought, 'Actually, we could have taken more children', then surely that should be fed back to Public Health, so that if we go back into this we are not limiting – and I understand special needs is different – the number of children in school quite so much.

255 **Deputy Fallaize:** Yes, you are right but you have to remember that the aim of the exercise was to limit the number of children who were together in school for public health reasons. So if we had had a free choice in the matter all children would have been in school. But we could not achieve that because of the public health requirement.

260 We were very clear, right from the beginning, that we would be completely guided by Public Health advice. Now, whether at various points we thought that any aspect of the advice was unfortunate or we could have done something differently in a sense is immaterial, other than feeding that back as a lesson learnt to be considered in the future; but we effectively maximised the number of children who had access to school under what was permitted, taking into account Public Health advice.

265 **The Chairman:** Can I just come back to you? Mrs Morris was just asking about younger children and their success or otherwise in accessing remote learning. But in terms of older children, shall we say Year 10, Year 11, Year 12, Year 13, how successful was remote learning *vis à vis* them, because potentially that is very different from younger children? What sorts of issues did that create, do you think?

270 **Deputy Fallaize:** I know what you are getting at in relation to whether there could be any long-term effects. I do not think that those children accessing distance learning was any more or less challenging. I think the issue we need to convey around public exam results and the success of those children as measured in that way, is you have to remember that public exam results are measuring the student's performance relative to the other students in the cohort – which for us means nationally, effectively, because our students are sitting national exams.

275 So the experience that our students had during lockdown relative to the experience of English students is very relevant here, and clearly our students on the whole had a better experience and missed less school time. There is no reason to believe that there should be any negative effect in terms of public exam results and that of the IB results which were published recently. I know you

280 were asking about Years 10 and 12 but nevertheless the IB results for this year's cohort are in line
with previous years. So that is initially an encouraging sign.

The Chairman: Another aspect of that is the pressure that is put on teachers because it affects
285 the results for those cohorts that are based on predicted grades, rather than the actual performance
in public examinations. Has that been something that has been discussed by the Committee with
the unions and with teaching staff, about ... How do the teachers feel about that, Ms Roughsedge?

Ms Roughsedge: It has not come up as a specific issue through the unions that we are aware of;
290 they are following a national set of guidance set by the exam boards about how to do that process.
Largely, once the teachers have submitted those grades it all gets moderated nationally and almost
that responsibility is taken away. There is quite a detailed process through the various exam boards
and then through Ofqual, that would take place to adjust the grades so they fall broadly in line with
previous years.

295 We have not had any feedback at all about that being a problem for school staff.

Deputy Fallaize: I think it is fair to say that the head teachers and teachers are apprehensive
300 about the methodology that will be used to calculate public exam results, because it has not been
done in this way before. It is not being done by the UK government, but their performance in dealing
with other aspects of COVID does not necessarily fill one with enormous amounts of confidence
and we do not know how rigorous or credible the methodology will be for calculating exam results.

I will give you an example: there is one secondary school which has predictive grades which are
substantially ahead of where they have tended to be historically. I think there is some apprehension
about that. If history is taken into account, will those students in that cohort receive the results they
deserve? This applies nationally, but we do not know the extent to which schools may be wanting
305 to appeal or how fair and accurate they will feel the process is. But we are in the hands of the
national examining bodies.

The Chairman: Do you want to move on, Mrs Morris?

310 **Mrs Morris:** I was going to move on to Years 10 and 12, actually, and whether you are planning
on any additional support for them, given that they have seen what happened to the year above
them this year, and I think that has probably put the fear of God into them.

So, is there any additional support for them as they go into their GCSE and A-level years?

315 **Mr Hynes:** I do not think there is anything specific planned in schools at the moment, apart from
ensuring that they are covering the content of the syllabus that they are expected to cover.
Interestingly, there was a letter from the Minister in England to Ofqual to start thinking about what
the 2021 examinations might look like for the current Year 10s and Year 12s; and what they are
determined to do for those cohorts in 2021 is to make sure that they are going to continue with
320 examinations. But what they are thinking about doing at the moment – and they have asked Ofqual
to look into this – is firstly whether those examinations are put back to later in the summer, so the
examinations start later to give schools time to complete content which they may have missed out
on already, but also to look at how examinations are set up and how adaptable they might be. So
even though all the content will be in the examination they might not be expected to answer
325 questions on all of the content because they may not have covered all of the content yet.

So the Department for Education in England are asking Ofqual to look at what adaptations can be
made with those examinations and also whether they can be later in the year. But again we are
going to be within the hands of Ofqual and with the English examination boards as to how that is
applied, because we will have to follow the same regulations.

330 I think one of the positive things which Matt has already said is: because the lockdown period
here was so much shorter with regard to actually attending school, even if you did not access

anything during distance learning the impact on our students and young people in Year 10 and Year 12 would be minimised in comparison to their counterparts in England. So we would be hopeful that more aspects of the syllabus and content would have been delivered than some of their counterparts in England.

The Chairman: Actually, before we get into other areas can I just ask: has Education, Sport & Culture received additional funding from P&R, as I believe both HSC and Home Affairs have effectively confirmed that additional funding has been provided in dealing with the pandemic? Is that also the case in relation to Education, Sport & Culture?

Deputy Fallaize: Not that I am aware of. We have returned some of our revenue budget. Our budget position at the end of June is about a million pounds under budget. We have taken a hit because of the income-raising parts of the Committee's responsibilities Beau Sejour, for example, the income is down by hundreds of thousands of pounds. But that has been outweighed by savings in expenditure. So the overall budget position at the moment is favourable and we have already returned some money to the Treasury, and I understand that we are going to be in a position to return some more in August or September.

I am not aware that we have received additional funding. There may be one or two areas where we need to apply for funding and if we identify any areas of expenditure which are specifically caused by COVID then we will ask for additional funding.

Ms Roughsedge: We can probably add to that. We were asked to record anything that was an additional expense as the result of COVID so one would be in the schools, for example, not being closed; but when the schools were in the process of welcoming back more students we were able to put a separate budget code aside for all the signage and the floor stickers and all of the extra cleaning materials that schools needed to be able to welcome back all the students. So, yes, I think as we have been given a sum of money, we have got to make a claim ...

The Chairman: All right.
Deputy Merrett.

Deputy Merrett: Thank you.
I am sure we all can appreciate that Education is more than just about the academia of education. Dr Murray, the HSC clinical psychologist, in an article on local media, I will not name the *Press*, on 20th April this was, I am sure – you have probably seen it, Deputy Fallaize ... But it was concerned about the mental toll of lockdown particularly on children. There is also Barnardo's YouGov survey of 4,000, of which approximately a third said they experienced an increase of their mental health issues and that includes stress, loneliness and worry.

So I would like to ask what measures were taken, and will be taken, to help identify these children and young people who may be struggling, and what support will be in place?

Now, Scrutiny appreciates that we are not out of the COVID-19 pandemic, but what measures were taken to help identify these children and what support? I suppose I am looking for a story of support, which is probably where I am going. But what support and how often were the children and young people contacted in person – not via an email, but in person – to ensure their health and well-being?

Mr Hynes: I am happy to pick that up. We have got a real focus on developing mental health and well-being of all children and young people as a core part of the curriculum anyway. So we feel, and what we have seen so far is we have been pretty well placed to meet the needs of children's mental health and well-being at a restorative level.

We have got mental health and well-being first aid training in all of our schools and so all of our teachers have gone through Level 1 Mental Health First Aid training prior to COVID-19. Also, we

385 have Mental Health First Aid champions in every single school who have all attained Level 2, which is about actually identifying and looking at the signs for children who may be suffering from mental health and well-being as a Tier 1 approach; and then also being able to signpost additional support they might need if they need to have additional support from HSC colleagues or CAMHS or anything like that.

390 **Deputy Merrett:** But how often were the children, the students, generally contacted, because via email it is very difficult to know the tone – we do not even know who is by the keyboard, to be frank, do we? So how often were our students and our children and young people contacted to try to gauge *as best as* ... their health and well-being?

395 **Mr Hynes:** I do not necessarily like it, but the definition of ‘vulnerable’ covered a multiple of different situations for children and young people who were during this period of time, and it continues to be so – being part of a vulnerable group might mean you have got special educational needs or disabilities, or it might mean you have English as an additional language, or it might mean that you are a looked-after child. But in addition to that we broadened that group to include
400 anybody that the school might identify as being vulnerable because of the personal circumstances, either within the family or their own circumstances that they might be aware of.

Then also, our School Attendance Service identified any ... We looked and cross-referenced that list of children and young people with the list we might have had of children and young people who are already getting support from the School Attendance Service or any other services. So we
405 had really good data and information around the young people who might have needed those daily calls. Then between schools and the School Attendance Service we did make those daily phone calls to those homes and those young people.

When we were not able to make contact via that way we actually teamed up with Health and Social Care and did eyes-on visits to families and children to make sure they were okay – social
410 distancing in the garden, and just to speak to them about whether they were coping well with the situation, whether they were well, whether it might be to do with learning, or it might be to do with their mental health and well-being. If we felt at that point that they would benefit from coming in we did operate that flexibility within the realms of Public Health to say, ‘Actually, in our view, measuring up the risk factors about whether it is safer for you to be at home or it is safer for you to be within that school environment ...’, we will measure that risk and invite them into school. We did
415 that for a number of families and children where we felt that it might be a beneficial path, in some cases because of their mental health and well-being and information, and we acknowledged we knew about those young people.

420 **Deputy Merrett:** Okay, that is really good. But some of the Committees we have spoken to so far had a few concerns about data collection. So can you give us an indication of what percentage of additional students were actually able to access the school environment during lockdown? I mean, what percentage of additional students were identified – so this is not the children that were already identified as being vulnerable, but what additional students?

425 A percentage is fine – obviously we are a small community, do not give me a number. What percentage? What was actually recognised?

Mr Hynes: What might be a good indication was at the beginning of lockdown, in week one, we had 12% of our identified vulnerable children attending. (**Deputy Merrett:** Okay.) By week six we
430 had 30% (**Deputy Merrett:** Good.) of children identified as vulnerable attending ... (**Deputy Merrett:** Not good.) So what I am saying is between week one and week six we actually identified, by doing those follow-up calls, an additional 18% of children who we felt it would be beneficial to come into school.

435 **Deputy Merrett:** That is reassuring. Thank you very much.

Mr Hynes: It is worth saying, whilst it is not necessarily a *nice* celebration to say we are identifying children and young people who need additional support, when you compare that to some of the concerns that the Children's Commissioner in England is sharing around, that less than 1% of their vulnerable children have attended – it is a really good statistic.

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The Chairman: Deputy Merrett.

Deputy Merrett: I just wanted to ask one more thing on the children. We have seen in other jurisdictions, for example, teachers going out carrying meals to children in vulnerable homes and situations. We know we have breakfast clubs in some of our schools. How was that identified? Because actually having breakfast clubs ... I know do not have, rightly or wrongly, free school meals, but actually having that structure in place so that our children and young people can access nutrition at certain times of the day, obviously that has all been thrown out by the schedule of home – and I will not use that term ... What term do you use?

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Mr Hynes and Deputy Fallaize: Distance learning.

Deputy Merrett: I am not using that other term, because that does not happen in my house. Distance learning.

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Was any consideration given to that in actually ensuring that these children and young people were able to access nutrition, something as simple as breakfast and a lunch on a daily basis? Was any consideration given to that?

Mr Hynes: I think it was through those daily conversations that the schools and the School Attendance Services were having with those families, and certainly them working in partnership with organisations like the Health Improvement Commission who work closely with Guernsey Welfare Service around the distribution and identification of food parcels. It was one of those things where – as we identified a difficulty that the family had – we were able to signpost and pass some of those concerns on to other parts of the organisation, where we were not always able to help. One of the really positive things that came out of it was actually the cross-Committee work, not just at a political or a civil servant level but actually across the third sector and across those different organisations who stepped up and offered to do different things – such as Les Cotils, for example – and we were able to try and make sure they were getting support through those ways.

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Mrs Morris: They were helping with the Refuge, weren't they?

Mr Hynes: Yes.

Deputy Fallaize: I think that is a point worth reiterating, about cross-Committee work. This was a crisis and Guernsey, historically, has tended to perform at its best in a crisis – or the States of Guernsey – and that might partly be because there is more flexibility. So Committee areas – political Committees particularly – are able to make more of their own judgements and occasionally try things that might be new. I think some of the shackles come off and that is part of the reason why we tend to respond well in a crisis. We have now reimposed some of the more frustrating characteristics of the bureaucracy since lockdown has ended and I do not necessarily think that is a good thing. So I think that lies behind the generally positive response to COVID.

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Mrs Morris: So just picking up on that, because we are here to record lessons learnt. You have just said that there are some bureaucratic elements that have crept back in that you seem to think we should possibly not be doing. Can you give us an example –?

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The Chairman: What are they? *(Laughter)*

Mrs Morris: What are they and –?

490 **Deputy Fallaize:** Okay, this is a very wide subject which goes well beyond COVID but I think we
are in a culture where there is quite a lot of controlling by the centre of what happens under
Committee areas, whether in relation to recruitment or expenditure or the development of policy. I
think that at a time of stress, or distress, and crisis the public sector just does not have the capacity
495 to do all of that and therefore there is a bit more flexibility and freedom to respond dynamically
and creatively to the challenges that you face.

We do not want to operate permanently in a crisis but I think there are some positive lessons to
learn of crisis management which we might be able to carry forward into non-crisis times. I think
that is widely accepted. I think that is generally accepted, certainly at political level.

500 **The Chairman:** I asked a question of your colleague, Deputy Lowe, earlier on this afternoon
about the COVID Recovery Advisory Group, or CRAG, which you also sit on as President of
Education, Sport & Culture. How do you think that has operated during the recent period? Has that
been helpful to Education, Sport & Culture, do you think?

505 **Deputy Fallaize:** I think it is helpful because it creates a forum for discussion with colleagues. I
think one has to remember what it is: it was set up as a Sub-Committee of the Policy & Resources
Committee to advise the Policy & Resources Committee in the development of the response to
COVID, and that is what it is doing. It is not making any executive decisions; it is not making any
policy. It meets for an hour or an hour and a half once a week so its impact is very limited, but it
510 provides a forum to share ideas and challenges and it is probably useful in that regard. It looks a
bit like the Policy Council and so it would not be a good idea to make it a permanent feature of our
system because it would probably revive all of the inefficiencies of that model. But it is a reasonably
useful forum for discussion, I think.

515 **The Chairman:** Whilst I am thinking about it, I seem to recall that towards the start of the
pandemic some fairly significant decisions were taken by the Civil Contingencies Authority *vis-à-vis*
Education – and not by Education, Sport & Culture. Looking back on that particular issue now,
Deputy Fallaize, how do you feel about that? Do you think there are any lessons learnt there?

520 **Deputy Fallaize:** I think that perhaps if things had continued as they were right at the beginning
it would have caused me some concern. But I think quite radical decisions had to be made very
quickly and it is not surprising if that is the challenge that sometimes the ordinary procedures for
making decisions are short-circuited. So I am not critical of that, but I think over time decisions were
being made at the normal level. So I do not have any lasting concerns about that. I think the Civil
525 Contingencies Authority *had* to act quickly and decisively and has been vindicated by the course of
the pandemic.

The Chairman: Deputy Merrett.

530 **Deputy Merrett:** I just want take you back a step, because I am very concerned, actually. Many
of our community see COVID-19 as a catalyst for change and what you alluded to earlier,
Deputy Fallaize, was – I do not mean to be, but I will be blunt – ‘the clipboard brigade’. You have
said they were marching round the corridors ... and I will call them the clipboard brigade. We have
gone back to almost like business as usual when actually we are looking for public service reform,
535 we are going to be challenged going forward with our resources. I was a bit surprised at your
comments.

Do you not believe then that the public service reform is actually going to be able to deliver this
catalyst for change, and that there are opportunities where positions potentially you will recognise

540 as not being required and they will just fall back to the business as usual? Is that a fair reflection of what you were saying?

Deputy Fallaize: I am optimistic that the public sector will be able to reform and not return to the way that things were necessarily done previously, but that is going to require an enormous cultural shift (**Deputy Merrett:** Yes.) because we are operating in a culture and in an era where 545 processes have replaced judgement and leadership, and the States have become incredibly reliant on procedures and processes. Sometimes for good reason, but it does stifle creativity and it certainly promotes inaction, if that is not an oxymoron.

I think that we have become masters at inaction (*Laughter*) and if we have learnt anything it is just that there is a price to pay for inaction and prevarication. (*Interjections*) But unless we have 550 serious cultural change throughout the organisation – and I do not think I am saying anything that the Chief Executive would not say, or senior colleagues would not say. Unless we have serious cultural change we are not going to be able to take advantages of the opportunities the Island needs to take advantage of.

555 **Deputy Merrett:** So, in summary, you do not believe that the catalysts for change, the opportunities here for us now, is not being reflected in your perception of what has happened subsequently?

Deputy Fallaize: Well, it is very, very early days, isn't it, and we are really still in the midst of the 560 COVID crisis and we are also coming towards the end of the States' term. So I think probably it would be your successors that would be well placed a year or so from now to carry out a serious review of the extent to which there has been structural and cultural reform as a result of lessons learnt from this period.

565 **Deputy Merrett:** So, as the President of Education, Sport & Culture, how do you believe you can influence that culture of change? You have recognised it so how do you think you can influence it?

Deputy Fallaize: I think it is about trying to be constructive and coming up with ideas for how 570 the public sector can reform the way it operates. There is no point just being critical about it because that is destructive. (*Interjection by the Chairman*) (*Laughter*) You have to try to make a constructive contribution to working with other colleagues who feel similarly to make sure the public sector is as well-equipped as it can be to face the challenges that are ahead.

575 **The Chairman:** Okay. Have we got any more questions?

Deputy Merrett: Are we doing anything on Sport & Culture?

580 **The Chairman:** Actually, just before we come to that, we talked about the parental survey and, just for the record, have you had feedback from the teaching staff, from the teachers, so far? Is that something that is in train?

Deputy Merrett: And the students.

585 **The Chairman:** And indeed pupils, yes.

Deputy Merrett: Is that your intent?

590 **Ms Roughsedge:** Yes. We have not done a survey with the staff because we were very conscious they were focusing on getting back into school. But we have met them regularly throughout

lockdown and our schools are preparing to reopen, with the unions, and we have heard the teacher voice by the unions. So we have not yet carried out a survey, but there is nothing to stop us doing that and certainly to think about how we would get some feedback from students who might benefit from some dialogue perhaps rather than do a survey, which was hard for some of them to complete.

595 But, yes, that is certainly something we would be keen to explore.

The Chairman: With teaching staff and with students?

Ms Roughsedge: Yes.

600

The Chairman: Okay. Just in terms of, we did touch on attendance before when the schools reopened – oh, happy day! – the attendance levels were very high. Has that continued until the end? I know it is quite a short window, it was a matter of weeks in the end, but did that ...?

605 There was a point made that the attendance level had been quite high on day one, 96% possibly, there or thereabouts. Did that continue until the end of term?

Mr Hynes: It did not continue to the end of term, but broadly speaking it returned to the levels we would have anticipated for this time of year.

610 **The Chairman:** Which is where, roughly? Do you have the figures?

Mr Hynes: Primary schools were round about 95% or so. So what I would say is that since we have returned we have not noticed a significant detrimental impact on attendance.

615 **The Chairman:** Okay, thank you.

Mrs Morris: Has your Committee taken any actions to support the viability of local sporting and cultural events – i.e. the other two thirds of your remit – during the crisis; and, to be honest, after so much had to be cancelled or deferred?

620

Deputy Fallaize: Yes, we worked very closely with the Guernsey Sports Commission and we were in frequent dialogue with them trying to identify parts of the sporting community which were suffering. We did support an application which they made, one of which was successful, for the allocation of some funds for sporting organisations which needed to get back on their feet; and one application which was unsuccessful. So we did, I think, as much as we could reasonably to support sport.

625

The cultural services which we provide, or the activities which we deliver, the things which are States' run of course were closed, but we did work closely with staff in that area to get them reopened as quickly as we could – so, Castle Cornet and Guernsey Museum. I think it is fair to say that next month we have proposals before the States for additional investment in sport and I think that the period of lockdown has highlighted just how important sport and physical activity are to this community; but also how vulnerable some of the clubs and organisations in that sector are and how they do require additional support if our community really, truly values sport and physical activity.

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635

The Chairman: Deputy Merrett.

Deputy Merrett: Deputy Fallaize, you said that many of the cultural aspects of the community were shut. Does that mean that the members of staff who would usually be in attendance and working in those establishments, were they paid in full during that period, or were they on the co-funded pay scheme? What happened if they were not able to go to work for reasons – (*Interjection by Mrs Morris*) were they employed, or what –?

640

645 **Deputy Fallaize:** Well, a proportion of them are full-time staff and in those cases they were working, because it is not only a customer-facing role. Quite a reasonable proportion of them are seasonal or part-time and so those people were not taken on initially, and some of them have now been taken on again because we have been able to reopen. But that is why it has taken some time to get some of the attractions reopened.

650 **Deputy Merrett:** Okay, and the same question. I think we all really appreciate and know that many teachers and support staff at the schools did indeed work above and beyond the expectation, and reacted in a way that is admirable. However, there are clearly going to be some support staff and some teachers that were not able to fulfil their job role during that period of time whether, for example, they had dependants they had to look after, be that elderly or minors below the school
655 age.

If they were unable to fulfil their job criteria were they still paid in full, or were they put on the co-funded pay scheme? How flexible were you able to be – not your good self, but the establishment – to accommodate their needs, while still accommodating the students? Were they all put on the co-payment scheme, for example? Or again, were they just paid in full and accepted
660 that actually they could not perform their job criteria?

Ms Roughsedge: I was not aware of any teaching staff or school staff not being able to fulfil their roles from home. I think what happened actually, particularly for teachers with young children, is that they did a lot of their own childcare during the day and then worked late into the evening to
665 fulfil the distance learning roles. I think probably what we found is people went above and beyond to fulfil their role rather than saying, 'Oh, I just can't do it', because I think they felt compelled to probably do more than they should have done, actually.

Deputy Merrett: Was that the same for all the support staff in the schools?
670

Ms Roughsedge: Yes, I think a number of the support staff continued to work because actually the schools were open, so a lot of the administrative staff were still required. Those that were not in were working remotely and supporting staff and school leaders that way. So people continued to work.
675

Deputy Merrett: So the flipside of that question is: was there adequate resource and people to actually deliver this distance learning?

Ms Roughsedge: I think it was challenging, particularly for the schools ... Some of our schools, because they are bigger primary schools, had a greater proportion of children attending and then they needed more groups to be able to spread the children out. So actually they were probably stretched, but we did fund additional supply teaching where it was necessary to be able to do that.
680

Deputy Fallaize: Some of our office-based staff were doing other non-Education COVID-related things; and some of the staff from here at Beau Sejour were doing something similar.
685

Mrs Morris: There was some redeployment?

Deputy Fallaize: There was a fair bit of redeployment.

690 **Mrs Morris:** Yes, and certainly that is what we have found with the Committees we have spoken to so far, not just that flexibility at the tactical level but flexibility amongst the staff and being willing to pitch in where they could, which is admirable.

Deputy Fallaize: It is.

695

Deputy Merrett: My last question – well, not my last question, I might have another one ... But, for now, do you believe there was adequate information and guidance given to parents and carers and students to enable them to access the – I cannot remember the terminology you used, I am so sorry.

700

Deputy Fallaize: Distance learning?

Deputy Merrett: Distance learning! *(Laughter)* I am trying not to use the other words because if one person says the other two words – because I never did the other two words, the home ‘thing’ – I would get quite cross.

705

So do you believe there was adequate resource and guidance given to parents, carers *and the students*?

Deputy Fallaize: Our staff worked very, very closely with union leads and school leaders during that two-week period before the holiday and during the holiday on preparing guidance material – the guidance material that went out to schools and which schools then sent out to parents, which went through lots of drafts and redrafts, and advice was taken from all sorts of professional people.

710

If you look at the survey results of parents, some of which I referred to earlier, in the secondary phase 74% of parents said they thought that there was an ideal level of communication from schools; and in the primary phase it was 90%. So I think that they are quite impressive figures. I think on the whole the parents felt that the level of communication was about right and the level of work being set was about right. So, yes, we do have some lessons to learn in that regard –

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Mrs Morris: So 26% did not think it was right, did they?

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Deputy Fallaize: Yes, that is true.

Mrs Morris: So of the 26% that did not think it was right, what kind of feedback did they –?

Deputy Fallaize: In the secondary phase 24% thought there should have been more communication and 2% wanted less. *(Laughter and interjection)* And in the primary phase 8% wanted more and 1% wanted less.

725

Mrs Morris: Can I just ask, in the survey, because I did not get the survey, was there an opportunity for parents to comment? If there was, have you learnt anything from that?

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Deputy Fallaize: Free text, do you mean?

Mrs Morris: Free text, exactly.

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Deputy Fallaize: I am afraid I am not sure if there was or there was not. I cannot remember.

Mrs Morris: Sometimes you get some nuggets out of that.

740 **Deputy Merrett:** So from a 'lessons learnt' perspective, 26% of parents or guardians ... I am quite interested to know and I am assuming you would be as well, as to why they felt that way ... This is about lessons learnt, this is about planning for the future and this is about what can we do better.

745 So I would encourage you, if possible, to consider that in the future especially when you go out with the survey, hopefully you will do it with students and teachers so that we can actually grasp the nettle and understand ... One in four is still quite high – 26%, 24% is still quite high. I am all for talking about the positives, but I think we need to understand the issues that those other parents or guardians had, and if there was no free text option I do not know how we learn. I do not know how we progress, that to me is ...

750 **Deputy Fallaize:** No, that is a very fair point. Yes, we accept that.

The Chairman: Turning to a slightly different issue, to what extent was it possible to have virtual classrooms in the States' sector? Is this something that could be facilitated at all – or not?

755 **Mr Hynes:** We took a decision early on that we were not going to do virtual classrooms, for a number of reasons, because we needed to have the flexibility of the young people and students accessing different things throughout the day, rather than tie them to a specific time where the teacher would be delivering that lesson at that time. So the pattern of distance learning was more about setting tasks for that day, at the beginning of the day, and then allowing parents to have the flexibility, who were working with those young people to deliver it over the *course* of the day rather than saying at between nine o'clock or 10 o'clock they must be doing this ... We felt it would add additional strain and stress on families and adults who were then trying to maybe support two or three different children –

765 **Mrs Morris:** And do their own job.

Mr Hynes: And do their own job. To tie them down to a specific time rather than be flexible about, 'Let's do that piece of work now, while I take this call ...' or whatever, was what we thought would –

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The Chairman: So the view was taken, was it, that it simply was not desirable to do?

Mr Hynes: It was more around the desirability rather than the ability to do it. We did discuss about whether we were able to do it.

775

The Chairman: And it would have been feasible?

Mr Hynes: It certainly happened within the College of Further Education, with the older students, they did some virtual classrooms –

780

Mrs Morris: And it certainly happened within the primary schools?

Mr Hynes: Yes.

785 **Deputy Merrett:** So you said 'desirability', but if it was a live session *per se* first of all I am pretty sure there is the possibility of recording it to access it at a later date. But, secondly, doesn't a live session give more opportunity for interaction with the student and the teacher, rather than having ...

...

790 **Deputy Fallaize:** Not if it is recorded.

Deputy Merrett: No, but the opportunity to attend is there and if you are unable to do so and the session is recorded, at least you can see the live interaction, because often if one person has got a question many in the class will have the same question. So it is a live interaction, at least. I understand that you believe there was this pressure, but actually should that not be for the students and the families to determine if they want to access it, and have the opportunity to access it, because it all could be recorded? I am a bit confused.

Whose desirability was it? The teachers? The students? Or the parents?

Mr Hynes: It was something we had considered, but we also considered at the time about any specific safeguarding issues around the risks and dangers of doing that; and certainly looking at advice in different jurisdictions, some have decided to do it and some have not. I think the pressure of doing it in a short period of time and being convinced that those children and young people could access remotely, adequately, and also that they were safeguarded whilst they were doing it, outweighed the fact that actually we were better off doing a quality distance-learning package which could be picked up and put down at different times during the day.

Certainly I think around the digital infrastructure and some of the lessons learnt is one of the bigger pictures for the whole of the community, let alone Education –

Mrs Morris: It is part of the Revive and Thrive, really.

Mr Hynes: Absolutely. Certainly some of the research coming out from the UK and also PwC's latest report is that the inequalities are highlighted more when you are looking at some sort of digital access; and actually we need to get better at ensuring that there is broader and additional access for all families irrespective of who they are – and with all due respect to who they are – because the inequalities are highlighted more when you start to look in that area.

Mrs Morris: This has just occurred to me, but given that we still have cohorts who are at the private schools who are supported by the States, have you shared experiences with the private schools to see whether there was anything that they learnt from their approach that might be helpful; and *vice versa*?

Mr Hynes: We have not done that piece of work as yet, but during the period of lockdown we were in regular contact with them about what they were going to do and what we were doing. We were sharing the different policies and approaches so that we could align on how we were doing things. Obviously there was a different approach when it came to delivering some of the lessons, but I do think obviously that is something which is well worth picking up on and seeing their experiences and our experiences –

Mrs Morris: Unlike some other jurisdictions, at least we can compare and contrast quite easily.

Mr Hynes: I think that is a really good idea.

Deputy Merrett: From a lessons-learnt perspective, could any consideration be given to at least once a week having a set time for form-time or tutor-time where all students could be invited into the virtual class just so they can see a teacher's face, they can see expression and they can actually communicate? It is the social aspect of not being at school, it is more than academia. Not to have that at all, not to see a teacher for how many months or ... We do not always speak – you can tell what I am doing now – with words, so could you possibly just consider having a fixed time? Whether the students attend or not is up to them, clearly; but just having that weekly contact in that environment with their class cohort, I just think that could be a massive benefit going forward.

Ms Roughsedge: Most of the primary schools did do that, from a more social position. So we were not trying to get a whole class together, because actually we just think it is very difficult to manage 24 or 26 seven-year-olds online. But they were doing that with much smaller groups to keep that interaction and friendship going as well. So I think that good practice was taking place –

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Deputy Merrett: In primary?

Ms Roughsedge: More so in primary, I believe, not so much around it in secondary. But that is not to say it was not happening –

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Deputy Merrett: I am just sure we can all appreciate that teenagers do not want to be with their parents. They do not. I do not take it personally, they just do not, and they want to be with their friends.

I think if it can just be a weekly contact, that may highlight children that may have some health and well-being needs.

855

Deputy Fallaize: We can certainly take that away as an idea. Yes, it is worth exploring that.

Deputy Merrett: You said to be constructive, so there you go.

860

Deputy Fallaize: Yes, that is good.

The Chairman: Just to conclude, in terms of crystallising what our major learning points are from the Education, Sport & Culture perspective. Does each of you in turn just want to sum up where you think you are with that insofar as you have identified?

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Mr Hynes?

Mr Hynes: No pressure! *(Laughter and interjections)*

870

The Chairman: Insofar as you can say.

Mr Hynes: Throughout the experience – and it is funny when you pause to think, my sister always said that experience is something when you get what you did not want. *(Laughter)*

So during the experience, I think one of the things that we certainly take away from it is knowing that some of the aspects of the transformation of things that we are doing at the moment, such as the digital roadmap, certainly need to be at the forefront of our minds and making sure that we are able to realise some of those benefits in the very near future. Certainly if some of the aspects that we are trying to deliver on around the digital roadmap had been in place during COVID, it would have been easier to deliver some of the digital aspects of learning and ensuring you had the right equipment at the right time.

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It ties in with so many different reports that are coming out internationally and also within debate in the Channel Islands, as I said with regard to the PwC report, and about how we know that can support future employability in the future as well. So I think that is at the forefront of my mind, that we need to make sure it is in place should anything happen like this again.

885

Mrs Morris: And it fits quite nicely into the whole Revive and Thrive.

Mr Hynes: Absolutely.

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The Chairman: Deputy Fallaize.

Deputy Fallaize: I think in addition to what Nick has said, if we end up back in lockdown or we have to have a similar experience what I would like us to do, which I am not sure we were able to do first time around, is to get some really good quality understanding and data on the inequality gap. We were very concerned about that throughout, and we wanted to ensure that whatever we were offering could be accessed by all children, or as many children as possible; because you could provide some of this type of distance learning operation in a way that might be very successful for some children who could access it, but it is inaccessible for other children. Schools generally tend to be quite effective social levellers, so when the children are not in school there is a danger of the socio-economic gaps and inequality being exacerbated.

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900 If we were able to understand how to avoid that better or we could gather more accurate data on that, I think that would be a step forward.

The Chairman: Isn't that an argument for a shorter summer holiday?

905 **Deputy Fallaize:** Potentially, but we did actually consider varying the holidays, but teachers ... We had two weeks of distance-learning preparation, we had two weeks in the holiday period when schools were open for vulnerable children and children of key workers, and then we had staff having to maintain this completely new distance-learning offer. I think it would have been extremely unfair, given the tremendous efforts they made, for us to start varying the summer holiday at short notice.

910 **Deputy Merrett:** We can appreciate that for 2020. However, if there are already gaps noticed, and some Members have asked, it may be, would it not, that in 2020-21 or any future date, there may be a gap identified; and there may be a need just to have an extra bit of support which they may need?

915 **Mrs Morris:** So, summer school next year?

Deputy Merrett: Yes.

920 **Deputy Fallaize:** Sure. If we identify a worsening of inequality, then we will take action to do something about it.

Mrs Morris: Can I just ask something ...?

925 What kind of data do you need to collect? We hear this *all* the time, it does not matter which Committee we talk to, it is always about the data – and either data is not being collected, or not being able to *access* the data. So can you just give me an example of a specific piece of data that would be *really* useful to you?

930 **Deputy Fallaize:** I would like to know in terms of attainment or performance of children, what was the experience broken down into socio-economic groups. That would allow us to see whether the attainment gap based on socio-economic group has got worse during distance learning.

935 Actually, this kind of data is helpful with distance learning or outside distance learning and it is important stuff. But I just have an instinctive sense that this may have been a particularly challenging experience for children who have greater challenges at home in any event.

The Chairman: Ms Roughsedge, do you have any ...?

940 **Ms Roughsedge:** Yes, I think for the area of work that I was looking at, which was very much around operations and business continuity, very much about trying to make sure we are in a better place should anything like this happen again and that we are more ready ... And we *are* now because although we prepared documentation for different phases of reopening, we have not finalised it because we skipped a phase – we did not do Phase 3, we went straight into Phase 4.

945 So it is making sure we have taken the time to make sure that we are ready for any future second wave or any eventuality like this, to make sure our schools are ready to move very quickly, without having to write guidance overnight and things like that, which would be good!

Mrs Morris: Yes, and as a former risk manager, I would say get it done now –

950 **Ms Roughsedge:** Yes, that is what we are doing –

Mrs Morris: – because everybody will forget.

955 **Deputy Merrett:** Deputy Fallaize, you were talking about the socio-economic indicators. Am I right in my understanding that actually at the moment we generically use the income allowances that go into which particular schools and which particular year groups in these schools? Is that the key indicator that you use at the moment? That is not really data collecting, but is that the key indicator? Is that a fair comment?

960 **Mr Hynes:** Yes, we use the uniform allowance as the main socio-economic indicator. We have that data and we can track year-on-year the performance against those different groups.

With data protection laws some of our ability to access that data has changed, so it is parents self-declaring that they are claiming that benefit, as opposed to us automatically knowing, as we used to. We also obviously work closely with Employment and Social Security benefit payments as a percentage, but not at an individual level.

965 So we can collate that data and look at where the gaps are, and then put in different services, support and intervention where there are schools who have a higher percentage of children and young people who are suffering those inequalities; but also it is not just where there is the highest percentage but where we are seeing the biggest gaps between peers.

970 **Deputy Fallaize:** I think that is not an Education-only challenge. I think across the States we have not been, historically, concerned enough with the effect of socio-economic inequality on educational outcomes, health outcomes, employment prospects –

975 **Mrs Morris:** I am sure we did a review on in-work poverty, that has not gone anywhere?

Deputy Fallaize: I do not disagree with you, but we just historically have not been concerned enough with these things, and that needs to be placed at the centre of Revive and Thrive. But it is challenging.

980 **The Chairman:** Can I just conclude with one question, which is probably opening a massive can of worms?

985 Are there any implications from the way in which Education has responded to COVID during the lockdown for the restructuring of the secondary estate in terms of whether we are going to continue with the *status quo*, which you have said many times is not a good basis of providing secondary education with four relatively small schools, moving to three, moving to two, or whatever? Are there any particular learning points there, or is that not a factor?

990 **Deputy Fallaize:** I think in terms of floor space of schools it is very difficult to make any decisions about that based on a pandemic. The Grammar School and Sixth Form Centre at the present time, or the 11-16 phase, is operating at something like 60% or 65% capacity. St Sampson's High School is operating at what we would consider close to 100%.

Now, those two schools had the same experiences during lockdown and just because we had 40% space in one school we were not able to have any more students in. So if you wanted to keep schools open at a time when you are in lockdown you can imagine how much floor space you would

995 need per student. So I do not think that could be taken into account in terms of measuring floor
space.

The Chairman: You cannot glibly say social distancing is easier in a smaller school, therefore do
not have two schools. That is not a rational analysis ...?

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Deputy Fallaize: No. You will forgive me for not getting drawn into how many schools there
should be. *(Laughter)* There are lots of good reasons for various school models but I do not think
that future pandemics is one of them. *(Interjection by the Chairman)*

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I do think, however, that it highlights the advantage of trying to make the offer between the
schools as similar as possible because I think, when the system is under some distress, that the more
common practice you have across the system the more consistent the offer will be to students. So
however many schools there are moving forward, I think working closely together collaboratively
and as far as possible trying to get equality of opportunity remains paramount.

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Deputy Merrett: Would resilience come into that as well, though?

If you have got a maths department or a science department, or faculty, then you have more
resilience in that particular establishment. Would that not be how resilience would work? It would
take a bit of stress off the teachers, because they are actually working amongst a *team*?

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Deputy Fallaize: Clearly, that is one of the reasons why there needs to be reform because we
are trying to operate a four-school model in the secondary sector, and in some cases we have single
teacher departments, which puts tremendous strain on those teachers and limits sharing of good
practice. So yes, that, among many other reasons, is an important reason for reform.

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The States have directed us initially to get on with a review of various two- and three-school
models and that is what we are doing. But obviously it will be for our successor Committee to make
recommendations and for the next States, hopefully, to come to a conclusion and stick to it.
(Interjections)

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The Chairman: Right. I think that probably brings us to a nice end. Thank you very much indeed
for coming this afternoon. There will be a *Hansard* transcript.

Much appreciated, thank you.

The Committee adjourned 17:05.