

Transforming Secondary Education in Guernsey and Alderney

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Summary

Restructuring and modernising secondary education in Guernsey and Alderney is a vital part of the Education Department's 20 year vision for the islands. Building on solid foundations, the Department is considering proposals to improve outcomes for all students through developing a co-operative, federated approach to secondary schooling. The Board is considering implementing this in phases but a collaborative approach with the five secondary schools (Grammar and Sixth Form Centre, La Mare de Carteret High School, Les Beaucamps High School, St Anne's and St Sampsons High School) is considered the preferred model as it will drive a collaborative approach and champion enhanced leadership, with a stronger focus on teaching and learning and the sharing of best practice, along with assessment and accountability. It will enable more efficient and effective deployment of staff and other resources, and most importantly improve educational outcomes and give equality of opportunity for all students, wherever they live in the islands.

Today's Learners Tomorrow's World

The Education Department set out its Vision for Education over the next 20 years in its report dated 13 May 2013, which was considered by the States at their meeting in July 2013. In this report the Department's vision is expressed as follows:-

"The Department's aim is to create an education system for the Bailiwick of Guernsey which will meet the challenges and demands of the 21st Century and provide our greatest asset, our people, with the knowledge, skills and tools to face a complex and challenging future with enthusiasm and confidence."

The provision of modern, enhanced secondary education is a critical part of achieving this vision. The Department has pledged to:-

- Develop educational centres of excellence based on high standards of teaching and learning with high expectations for all, where:
 - o Learners enjoy learning;
 - o Teachers enjoy teaching;
 - o Parents and carers are embraced as partners; and
 - o The wider community is welcomed and encouraged to participate.
- Provide an inclusive system that puts learners of any age at the centre, establishes equality of opportunity for all to realise their potential and ensures that each learner

develops the knowledge, understanding and skills they need to pursue a happy and fulfilling life.

- Encourage and enable learners to become creative, innovative and critical thinkers. To establish a strong work-ethic and to equip them morally, socially, physically and academically to participate in their local community and the evolving global society in the areas best-suited to their interests, talents and aspirations.
- Provide and encourage participation in a wide range of experiences such as sport, music, arts, activity and volunteer programmes, where mutual respect and collaboration is fostered, both in and out of school.
- Deliver all its services in the most efficient, effective and sustainable way.

The Department cannot secure the above unless it modernises and restructures the provision of secondary education in the Islands.

Why Do We Need To Change Secondary School Provision?

The Islands' secondary schools face a number of serious challenges now including:-

1. a focus on improving educational standards and outcomes;
2. delivery of broad and balanced curricula, offering a full range of subjects to appropriate levels;
3. difficulties in delivering minority subjects;
4. an inequality of educational opportunity across the schools (based on size of school and catchment);
5. the inefficient use of teachers through student/teacher ratios (PTRs) that are very low (and below current policy); variations across the schools in teacher contact hours with student and senior managers; and terms and conditions which no longer reflect best practice in the profession;
6. the need to ensure that sufficient teachers with the right skills and experience can continue to be recruited (given that almost 40% of the current work force is older than 50 years of age) against a backdrop of national/international shortage in certain key subject areas;
7. the imperative for schools to operate effectively and deliver value for the public monies invested in them; and
8. the need to rebalance teachers' work to focus on teaching and learning through greater use of support staff.

The Global Context

In its Vision, the Department commented:-

"Education is constantly changing. Our world has moved in a new direction, and education must keep pace. It is no longer enough just to look at our near neighbours in the United Kingdom. We are competing increasingly on a global stage; we must prepare our young people for jobs and careers that do not even exist yet and we must do so in the face of financial constraints. We must ensure that we use our limited resources efficiently and sustainably and that may mean doing things differently."

To facilitate this objective the Department has looked at the provision of secondary education beyond the UK, and has researched best practice in countries with high educational performances and reputations from Canada (Ontario) to Singapore, Finland to Hong Kong and Japan to China (Shanghai).

Educational systems in all these areas share certain common features including the implementation of comprehensive plans for school improvement which involve improving teacher quality, granting greater autonomy to the front line, modernising curricula, making schools more accountable to their communities, harnessing detailed performance data and encouraging professional collaboration.

Recent experience in the UK also shows the benefits of a federated approach to secondary education. Education watchdog Ofsted reported in 2011 on the success of federated schools following extensive research with visits to 61 such schools, and questionnaires from 111 federations. This research shows that standards in these schools were improved in three key areas of teaching and learning, behaviour and pupils' achievement. The federations visited used their pool of shared resources and expertise flexibly across the schools to improve and maintain good quality teaching and learning. The work also showed that because of the greater opportunities open to pupils, federations increased pupils' curriculum opportunities, enjoyment and confidence.

Importantly, the leaders and governors interviewed as part of this research were positive about the benefits of federation. They saw professional development, staff retention, greater availability of resources and the ability to attract high-quality leaders as the key reasons why federation led to improvements to provision.

We believe a similar approach is necessary in Guernsey, and the Department's plans for revising secondary education will enable and facilitate these improvements to be delivered in Guernsey and Alderney.

The Link to Guernsey's Economic Development Strategy

These proposed developments in secondary education are very much in tune with the Island's Statement of Fiscal & Economic Policy Plan General Objectives and Themes as approved by the States in March 2013, as part of the States Strategic Plan, and also with Alderney's Economic Development Strategy (approved by the States in January 2014). Both Strategies recognise the need for learners to have the right skills and qualifications, as well as the necessary life skills and confidence to be able to enter and succeed in the economies which the Islands are working to develop.

Indeed research undertaken in Guernsey has shown that while 69% of local employers felt their employees were adequately skilled, 31% saw gaps in skills. The most prominent gaps were perceived to concern "soft skills" such as customer handling, communication and leadership.

It is clearly very important that Islanders are receiving the right educational training and experiences to equip them for jobs not only in the current economy, but also for the new opportunities which will emerge as the Island's economic strategy unfolds. While much of this is about gaining qualifications, skills and experience, other less tangible aspects are therefore equally important such as confidence, self-belief, motivation, leadership and enjoyment.

With international competitor jurisdictions investing heavily in education, skills and training to equip their workforces with a competitive advantage, it is clearly very important for Guernsey to continue to build on its strong foundations in terms of education and skills provision. The Department's proposals regarding the reorganisation of secondary education are critical to achieving these goals.

Competition or Collaboration?

Guernsey is not alone in facing such challenges. The answer elsewhere in the UK, Europe and beyond has either been through throwing secondary education open to competition, or strengthening secondary education through schools working together (collaboration). We firmly believe that there is much more to be gained through schools in Guernsey and Alderney working in partnership together rather than competing.

In a competitive environment there would be no catchment areas, no selection, a "free market" would operate in most support services, local school governance structures would be established and it would be eminently possible for some schools to prosper while others failed. While such a model may well deliver significant benefits in large markets, Guernsey and Alderney are considered too small for the benefits to outweigh the serious disadvantages. The Education Board further notes that there has been limited success in Guernsey in developing a more collaborative model of secondary education in the recent past. It has therefore given detailed consideration of the development of a federated or collaborative approach.

What are the Key Benefits of a Federated or Collaborative Approach?

The Education Department believes that a collaborative approach, whereby our five mainstream secondary schools work in partnership, will deliver key benefits for the students, schools and their staff, as well as the Education Department and the taxpayer.

The Benefits include:

For students:-

1. Equality of provision through the introduction of a common wider school curriculum (irrespective of which school attended);
2. Equality of teaching time – all students would receive 25 hours of tuition per week
3. Increased personalisation of the curricula for every student;
4. Enabling logical, planned progression across a wider range of courses and key levels;
5. An extension of the range of extended school activities offered to pupils.

For Teaching and Learning Standards:-

1. Larger teams working across schools, sharing best practice to improve learning;
2. More staff focusing on and delivering within specialist areas; and
3. More representative performance measures to guide future actions, through the elimination of biases of results from small cohorts.

For Staffing in the Schools

1. Greater flexibility of staff deployment across subjects;
2. Avoiding single teacher “departments”; and
3. The ability to introduce more effective and cost efficient staffing structures.

For Recruitment

1. More attractive jobs because teachers would be able to teach across all key stages through secondary education, including Post 16, thus enhancing career opportunities and progression; and
2. Greater promotion opportunities to encourage and reward effective teachers within larger overall teams;
3. Opportunity to broaden experience through working across different schools.

For Tax Payers

1. More efficient use of limited resources (including money) by avoiding duplication across the schools, and enabling economies of scale;
2. Maximises efficient use of staff across schools; and
3. Gives greater accountability and more authority to the schools in the use of their resources (including budgets).

The Education Board has committed to a consultation on the future of selection within Guernsey’s secondary education system. The Board is of the view however that, if it were minded, following a public consultation, to take a States Report to the Assembly recommending the removal of selection and moving towards a comprehensive education system, this, by itself, will not improve the educational standards and outcomes for the Bailiwick’s young people.

The Education Department is committed to reporting to the States on the merits and demerits of the selection to secondary schools. However, it believes that the current imperative is to progress the modernisation and reorganisation of secondary education in the States schools. As these improvements are being made across the States’ schools, it will develop criteria that will need to be met before researching and reporting to the States on the place for selection in the new system for secondary education. So, to confirm, the collaborative model being recommended continues with three High Schools, The Grammar School & Sixth Form Centre, and an all-age school in Alderney.

The Education Board believes that developing a collaborative approach to secondary education will deliver sustainable benefits more quickly for our young people. It has therefore prioritised the development of a collaborative approach to secondary education before any consultation on selection.

How would Collaboration Work?

A first step would be the introduction of common timetable blocks for all the secondary schools in Guernsey¹. The current conditions of service for teaching staff provide the flexibility for transfer from one educational establishment to another, but there would be a need to make this more explicit, particularly with respect to new staff recruited to the Service. The Board is charging the Department and Head teachers to develop a more collaborative model of secondary education within our existing mainstream schools to deliver the three key objectives, **improving educational outcomes, ensuring equality of access and delivering greater efficiencies**.

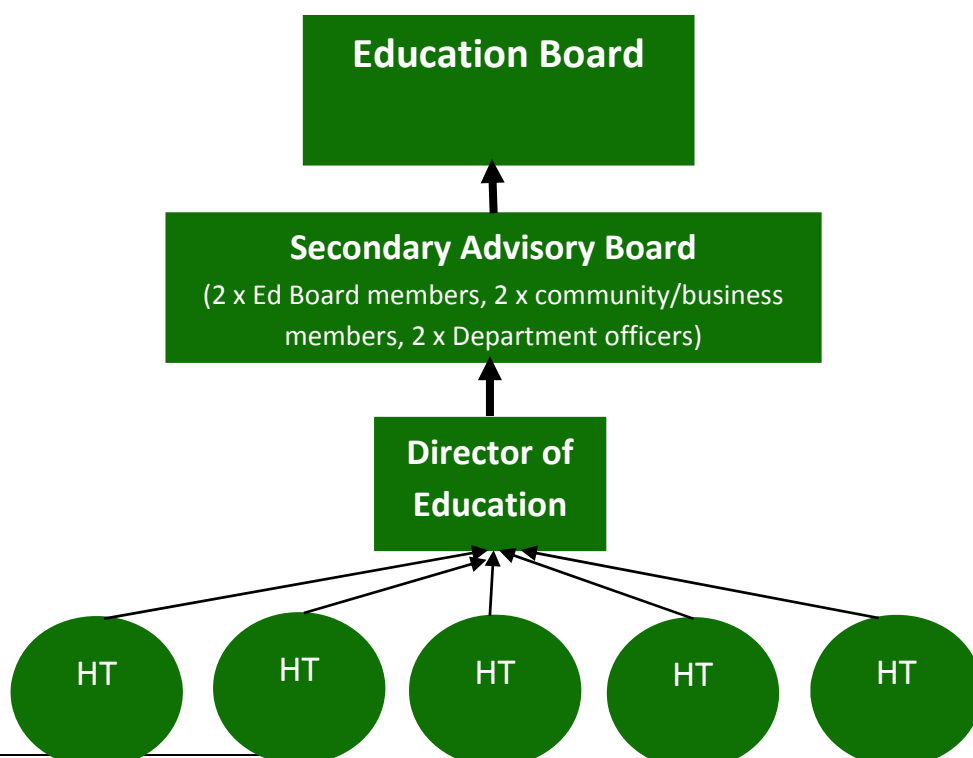
Headteachers would be tasked to work together for the greater good of all secondary phase schools, staff and students.

The headteachers, both individually and collectively, would be accountable to the Director of Education for the development of this collaborative model and for the realisation of the benefits and for the improvement in outcomes for students. The Director would be supported by a new interim Secondary Advisory Board with devolved authority from the Education Board.

The Secondary Advisory Board would include two political representatives, two community representatives and two senior officers from the Department.

We will be working with the service to get the best from this collaborative model and have confidence in the headteachers to deliver.

The reporting arrangements for this collaborative model are shown in the following figure.



¹ St Anne's due to its geographical remoteness would not require a common timetable with the Bailiwick Secondary Schools, However it would move to a similar structure of 6 x 50 min lesson periods a day. Le Murier would also be expected to work towards a common timetable to allow the integration of its students into mainstream education at St Sampson's High School.

What Does This Mean for the Five Secondary Schools?

There would still be five mainstream secondary school campuses (Les Beaucamps, St Sampson's, La Mare de Carteret², St Anne's and the Grammar School & Sixth Form Centre with their own Head Teachers and school identity, but they would effectively "federate". Special schools and the College of Further Education would also be expected to work with and support the objectives of the federation. There will be further discussions with the heads of these establishments to agree details.

Once the model is established there will be further opportunities to give even greater control and authority to the federated schools, reducing central costs at the Department, and strengthening governance arrangements for the schools. A new governance arrangement is currently being piloted at the College of Further Education, which mirrors some of the greater autonomy envisaged for the secondary schools, and which has greater involvement from local business and the community. Lessons learnt from this experience can be used to enhance the model before governance for the secondary schools is further developed. This longer-term objective reflects the Board's commitment to devolve increased decision making and accountability to schools through a Guernsey Local Management of Schools and a new form of school governance.

The Department has developed a timetable with the five secondary Headteachers, which it proposes to introduce from September 2014.

Proposed Timetable 2014-15.³

Period	High Schools			Grammar & SFC
	LBHS	LMDC	SSHS	
Registration / Assembly/Tutorial	8.30-8.50 (10 mins earlier)	8.30-8.50 (5 mins earlier)	8.30-8.50 (5 mins earlier)	8.30-8.50 (10 mins earlier)
1	8.50-9.40	8.50-9.40	8.50-9.40	8.50-9.40
2	9.40-10.30	9.40-10.30	9.40-10.30	9.40-10.30
Break	10.30-10.45	10.30-10.45	10.30-10.45	10.30-10.55
3	10.45-11.35	10.45-11.35	10.45-11.35	10.55-11.45
4	11.35-12.25	11.35-12.25	11.35-12.25	11.45-12.35.
Lunch	12.25-13.25	12.25-13.25	12.25-13.25	12.35-13.50
5	13.25-14.15	13.25-14.15	13.25-14.15	13.50-14.40
6	14.15-15.05 (5 mins later)	14.15-15.05 (5 mins later)	14.15-15.05 (10 mins later)	14.40-15.30

² The Board is committed to the rebuild of the La Mare de Carteret Schools as there is not sufficient capacity within the existing secondary educational institutions to absorb the current and projected student numbers. It is similarly not possible to extend the current schools to accommodate all the students.

³ Highlighted blocks show differences in start and finish times compared with current times.

St. Anne's would also move to a structure of 6 x 50 minute lesson periods a day within the secondary phase. This ensures that they have similar provision of lessons to the students in Guernsey.

The Education Department and Board will be working closely with the Environment Department to deliver a new timetable framework from September 2014.

In the three High Schools, each student's lesson time would increase to 25 hours per week from 23.75 hours per week. This will have the effect of increasing each High School day by 15 minutes. Students would therefore benefit by an additional 1 ¼ hours tuition each week. Over five years in secondary education this amounts to approximately 10 weeks additional lesson time.

Standard student lesson time in England is 25 hours per week.

Currently the external accreditation offer at KS4 varies from school to school and an additional benefit of a shared timetable includes the ability for staff or students to move more easily between schools as a means of offering more breadth in the curriculum. It would also allow outstanding teachers to work across the five schools to share good practice and provide support where required. Within a unified school day, senior staff would also have the benefit of easier access to all schools, allowing them to work strategically to implement policy as well as to teach within their base school.

Risks

The Education Department recognises that the collaborative model is a transformational change to the Bailiwick's secondary education system and is not without risks. These changes would require absolute clarity in the roles of the headteachers, the Education Department and the Education Board in order for the transformational change to realise the anticipated benefits.

The principal risks include:

- Until there is clarity about the structures, roles and responsibilities within the federation there is the possibility that staff may become unsettled during this period of change;
- Disruption during the process of change, unless well managed, could impact on student outcomes;
- Opposition to the transformational changes which would undermine the realisation of the benefits.

Communication and engagement with all stakeholders will be an integral component of managing these risks.

Next Steps

The Board has directed officers and Headteachers to work together to design and introduce a more collaborative approach across all the secondary schools. As the proposals are further developed, the Department will continue to consult appropriately with staff unions and representatives, and liaise with the community through a series of consultations with appropriate bodies.

Conclusion

To continue to serve students well in Guernsey and Alderney, and to enable them to grasp the opportunities of the 21st Century (including its new economies) the Education Board believes it is now necessary to modernise and restructure secondary education. At the heart of the Education Department's Vision for secondary education is the threefold need to:-

- 1. Improve educational outcomes for learners;**
- 2. Provide true equality of service provision irrespective of school or catchment; and**
- 3. Deliver services efficiently and effectively thus providing value for money in the changing financial environment.**

The Board believes that this is best done through enhancing and developing co-operation between the five States secondary schools including the Sixth Form Centre rather than increased competition. As has been shown around the world a very effective way to do this is through a federated approach to the schools. This will require the Headteachers providing strong and dynamic leadership to improve outcomes, performance and accountability, and to maximise the use of resources (including people and money) across the schools. The success of this approach will be measured against the three key drivers highlighted above and the realisable benefits.

Contact: If you have any further questions about the federated approach please contact the Director of Education, Alan Brown, at office@education.gov.gg