

Education Reform Programme

Audit Specification

Background

Education in Jersey is the responsibility of the Children, Young People, Education and Skills Department (CYPES). The Jersey Curriculum is based on the new National Curriculum in England, adapted to reflect the Island's unique heritage and environment and the needs of the local economy.

The primary school provision comprise 22 non-fee-charging state primary schools, two fee-charging state primary schools and six fee-charging private schools. Secondary schools fall into three categories. There are four non-fee-charging state secondary schools which cover the 11-16 age group, and one for the 14-18 age group. There are two fee-charging state secondary schools and three private secondary schools.

In 2019 an independent review examined pupil attainment and school funding in Jersey. The Independent School Funding Review report published in October 2020 concluded that: *Overall, there is a significant gap between current provision and the aspiration for a world class education system.*

It assessed that additional funding of £8.5 million was required for education in Jersey and that other pressures in the education system added a further £3.1 million of deficit. The proposed additional £11.6 million for the statutory education system, based on the 2019 budget, represented a 13% uplift.

In 2021 the Government of Jersey launched the Education Reform Programme. The funding for the Programme was approved in the Government Plan 2021-24 for a four year period to 2024. This was extended to 2025 in the Government Plan 2022-25. Exhibit 1 contains more detail.

Exhibit 1: Education Reform Programme Funding

| | 2021 £000 | 2022 £000 | 2023 £000 | 2024 £000 | 2025 £000 |
|----------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Education Reform Programme | 7,946 | 11,200 | 11,200 | 11,583 | 11,583 |

Source: Government Plans 2021-24 and 2022-25

At the end of 2023 the Education Reform Programme was reported to be in closure with any remaining works forming part of business as usual for 2024. The additional funding associated with the Programme is also now part of 'business as usual' funding as part of the core departmental budget.

When the Education Reform Programme was launched it was intended to deliver

- higher attainment and achievement for Jersey's children and young people
- improved wellbeing and mental health for Jersey's children and young people
- higher standards of teaching and support for students with additional needs
- more efficient use of public money in the delivery of education, with better targeting of funding for the students that need this most
- improved relationships with local business, and a strengthened economy; and
- improved reputation of schools, the workforce and the Government of Jersey.

The Education Reform Programme contained over 25 projects broadly clustered into three areas:

- school finance and governance arrangements
- creating new and augmenting existing services; and
- developing transformational policy options.

In December 2021 the UK's National Association for Educational Needs (nasen) published its review of Jersey's practices and policies concerning inclusion. This identified that the prevailing approach to education in Jersey was based on separating provision and that there was an opportunity to move to a continuum of inclusion.

In 2022 the 50 recommendations from the nasen review were integrated into the Education Reform Programme. In addition, the Government Plan 2023-26 approved additional funding specifically targeted at inclusion of £6.1 million per annum from 2023.

The Functions of the Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG)

Article 11 of the Comptroller and Auditor General (Jersey) Law 2014 requires the C&AG to:

- provide the States with independent assurance that the public finances of Jersey are being regulated, controlled, supervised and accounted for in accordance with the Public Finances (Jersey) Law 2005
- consider and report to the States on:
 - the effectiveness of internal controls of the States, States funded bodies and funds
 - the economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the way the States, States funded bodies and funds use their resources; and
 - the general corporate governance arrangements of the States, States funded bodies and funds; and
- make recommendations to bring about improvement where improvement is needed.

Objectives of this audit

This audit will evaluate whether the Government has taken and is taking an approach to reforming education that:

- has clear short-, medium- and longer-term objectives derived from high quality evidence and robust risk analysis
- is designed to demonstrate improved educational outcomes; and
- is delivering value for money.

Scope

This audit will consider the progress and impact of the Education Reform Programme, including the principles of inclusion, as delivered by CYPES and within a sample of statutory education providers.

It will not consider post-18 education.

Audit approach

This audit will use a combination of a:

- Problem-oriented approach – is the Education Reform Programme well designed to solve identified problems and take identified opportunities?
- Result-oriented approach – is the Education Reform Programme delivering or likely to deliver its objectives? and
- System-oriented approach – do (or will) underlying systems and processes enable the effective delivery of the Education Reform Programme objectives?

The audit will evaluate how the Government has handled the following aspects:

- identifying the highest priority risks and ‘best practice’ opportunities
- developing and implementing a relevant, robust and resourced plan of action in line with priorities and best practice
- monitoring delivery to establish if intended benefits are being delivered
- taking action:
 - if things are off track
 - if new risks or opportunities are identified; and
 - to ensure a transfer to ‘Business as Usual’ (BAU) at a department and schools level, including through aligning systems and processes.

The audit will commence with an initial documentation request. The findings of the document review will be followed up by interviews with key officers and potentially with other stakeholders.

The audit fieldwork will commence in April 2025.

The detailed work will be undertaken by affiliates engaged by the C&AG.

Audit criteria

My audit will consider four questions about the Government's approach:



Source: JAO adaptation of programme management good practice



JERSEY AUDIT OFFICE

LYNN PAMMENT CBE
Comptroller and Auditor General

Jersey Audit Office, De Carteret House, 7 Castle Street, St Helier, Jersey JE2 3BT
T: +44 1534 716800 E: enquiries@jerseyauditoffice.je W: www.jerseyauditoffice.je