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Clear vision, measurable outcomes and sustainable funding needed for next stage of Island Education reform

Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG), Lynn Pamment CBE, has today, 7 November 2025, issued her report on the Education Reform Programme

Education in Jersey is the responsibility of the Children, Young People, Education and Skills Department (CYPES). The Education Reform Programme (ERP) was launched in 2021 following an Independent School Funding Review in 2019 (ISFR), which looked at pupil attainment and school funding in Jersey. That report identified '…*a significant gap between current provision and the aspiration for a world class education system.'*

The ERP 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 ERP was formally closed in March 2024 with any remaining works forming part of business as usual. The additional funding associated with the ERP is now part of the core budget of CYPES.

The C&AG's audit has evaluated 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.

It examined primary and secondary schools that are non-fee-charging or are State grant subsidised, including two 'special schools'. It did not examine private schools which receive no Government funding.

The C&AG found that when the ERP was established there was no articulation of what was meant by a 'world-class' education system. There was an absence of an Education Strategy setting out what the Government expected to achieve to deliver its ambition of a 'world-class' education system and the Government did not specify the expected standards for such a system.

The ERP focussed primarily on the ISFR recommendations relating to financial governance and new and existing services. The policy development options that had been recommended by the ISFR were not prioritised for delivery by successive Ministers.

A high standard of financial governance was adopted for allocating the additional ERP funding in accordance with the recommendations in the ISFR report. However, while the individual projects had clear principles and rationale for implementation, and some had clear indications of the way that results might be measured, there was no clear quantification of outcomes that were expected. The financial governance for monitoring how the money was actually spent, and the benefits realised as a consequence, are less clear.

Lynn Pamment CBE, Comptroller and Auditor General, said:

"While the overall aim of the Education Reform Programme was to ensure that Jersey had a world-class education system, the Government did not define what the metrics for a 'world-class' system would look like or specify expected standards. Instead a decision was made to implement the Independent School Funding Review recommendations to deliver improvement without an absolute benchmark.

"Some of the structural changes that would deliver a more efficient and sustainable education system have not been progressed through the Education Reform Programme. Much of the current structure remains historical.

"With now known falling birth rates there will be an excess of provision. This is already presenting as a key issue for primary schools, and, coupled with selection of learners at the age of 14, creates duplicity and additional costs in the system. Going forward, the funding of the fee-paying sector and the relationship of the fee-paying sector with the wider system will need careful consideration. In addition, greater clarity will be required as to the role that Highlands College plays in the overall strategy.

"The next phase of the Education Reform Programme, which is currently being developed, should include a focus on curriculum, inclusion, workforce development, early years investment and refinement of funding models. As part of the next phase of the Education Reform Programme it will be important to sustain good quality data in order to allocate and track resources in the most appropriate way and to define a clear strategy for achieving world-class education in Jersey."

The full report *Education Reform Programme* is available on the Jersey Audit Office website at: www.jerseyauditoffice.je

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JERSEY AUDIT OFFICE

For further information, please contact:

Rozena Pedley
M: 00 44 7797 733553 / T: 00 44 1534 629800
E: rozena.pedley@jerseyauditoffice.je

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- The Office of Comptroller and Auditor General is known as the 'Jersey Audit Office'.
- Contact details are: de Carteret House, 7 Castle Street, St Helier, Jersey JE2 3BT / T:716800 / E: enquiries@jerseyauditoffice.je

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