

THE FUTURE STRUCTURE OF SECONDARY AND POST-16 EDUCATION

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

February 2016

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1. Why do we need to change anything? Our education system is fine as it is.

We are often told that our education system doesn't need fixing but the reality is that the 11 plus, as a means of deciding which pupil goes to which secondary school, is not an appropriate way to determine the future of our children's secondary education. It fails to deliver equality of opportunity, fairness or the sort of social mobility that was originally intended.

Over recent years we have tried to find a way to make the selection tests as fair as possible but the impact of private coaching means that there will always be an unfair advantage to those who can afford to pay for this sort of coaching. In addition, there is unreliability when selection comes down to performance in a test on a particular day.

What we are aiming to do with our proposals is keep what is good about our education system but address some of the problems of inequality and fairness presented by our current selective process at age 11.

We are not slavishly following the system widely used in England. We have listened to what parents, students, our education professionals and the wider community have said they want from our education system and come up with our own Guernsey solution to best meet our needs.

At the heart of all our proposals is the absolute commitment to ensure that all our young people are able to reach their full potential and perform at the highest levels possible. We must provide an education system that caters for all our children and young people and ensure that they can make valued and lasting contributions to our society and the wider world.

2. What is unfair about our current system?

We recognise that directed choice or selection is a part of everyday life but it is interesting to note that parents are generally very happy with our catchment-based all-ability primary school system. Under our current system pupils are separated at 11 on the basis of two 11 plus exam papers; they are either selected to go to the Grammar School or one of the grant-aided Colleges or will attend their catchment high school. We know that sitting the 11 plus tests causes considerable anxiety to many of our children and does not reflect the concept of a growth mindset – the belief that intelligence is not fixed and that ability can be developed and improved by practice, dedication and hard work.

At the moment, between Years 7 and 11 our students will generally follow the same core curriculum and sit similar qualifications at their different schools, although the pace of teaching and learning may differ. We wish to improve the breadth of curriculum by further developing the Federation model so that all students can access a wider choice of subjects and keep their career pathways open.

At the moment, once our students have completed Year 11 and sat their GCSEs and other Level 2 qualifications they all come back together again at 16 – either at the Sixth Form Centre or the College of Further Education, to carry on their studies. The question we have to ask is why do we treat our children differently for 5 years of their schooling?

The most important factor in any education system remains quality of teaching. We will continue to do all we can to attract and retain high quality staff and school leaders.

In summary the current system is unfair because:

- **Pupils are selected based on a fixed test at a fixed point in time**
- **Children develop at different rates**
- **Anxiety caused by the 11 plus**
- **Impact of coaching by those who can afford it**

3. What are you actually proposing?

We have designed our own solution for Guernsey.

At the end of Year 6 children will transfer from their feeder catchment primary school to one States of Guernsey secondary school spread over four Guernsey mainstream sites – Les Beaucamps, La Mare de Carteret, St Sampson's and the current Grammar School site at Les Varendes.

Each site would cater for around 600-720 11-16 year olds and so would retain the benefits of smaller schools in terms of ethos, identity, close relationships between staff and pupils, monitoring attendance and behaviour, links with the surrounding local community etc. This was something that came through loud and clear from the public consultation.

All sites would offer a common Key Stage 3 curriculum. Basically this means that all students would be studying the same subjects for the first 3 years of their secondary school life – pretty much as they do now. There could be setting (grouping by ability) in some subjects, where beneficial, to ensure those of higher ability are stretched and challenged and those who require further help and support receive it. This will help ensure that all children are able to reach their full potential and provide equality of opportunity.

During Year 9 selection for pathways and options at Key Stage 4 (the subjects and qualifications they study in Years 10 and 11) would be based on an individual student's aptitude, ability, past performance, potential and preference. Choice of pathway would be finalised through guided and informed discussions between school staff, the student and their parents/carers along with impartial guidance from Careers Guernsey (as necessary). This would be overseen by the school's senior management team.

We are not proposing to close any school site. All four mainstream secondary sites in Guernsey would continue to operate.

Post-16 A Level and International Baccalaureate (IB) studies would continue to be delivered from the Les Varendes site and the College of Further Education would operate as now offering a range of BTEC courses and vocational qualifications (with the ultimate aim of moving onto a single site at Les Ozouets). As now there would be entry criteria to access either institution. Both institutions would be required to work closely together to ensure that students could mix and match courses where desirable.

In summary, we are proposing:

- **A solution which is best for Guernsey**
- **One secondary school over four sites**
- **Admission to secondary site depending on feeder primary school.**
- **Increased choice of and selection to pathways at 14**
- **School-based Post-16 A Level and IB at the Les Varendes site**
- **Continued provision at the College of Further Education**

4. When will your new proposals come into force?

Firstly we need the approval of the States for our plans. Deputies will be debating our proposals at their meeting beginning on 8th March. We are not proposing to start implementing any changes until September 2019. This means that the first children to be affected by any change will be those currently in Year 3.

We must ensure that we carefully plan for the implementation of our new structure to ensure that any transition is as smooth as possible with as little or no detrimental impact to our children and young people, our staff and our parents/carers and wider community.

5. Isn't it better to separate children at 11 and teach them in different schools?

Children perform differently according to age, gender, subject, aptitude, interest and motivation. It is too simple to assume that crude performance in a series of tests at a given age is sufficient reason to judge and divide peer-groups into separate schools for a very significant and important part of their schooling.

Children will often have different abilities in different subjects and will also generally develop at different rates. Girls tend to develop faster than boys but boys catch up as they get older. This is part of the problem with separating children at 11. The process does not recognise the many differences between children at this age. For example, this is shown in the gender split in the current Years 7 and 8 at the Grammar School where there are 98 girls and only 66 boys.

We commissioned University College London, Institute of Education, to look at all the research on selective versus non-selective education systems (you can access the full independent report at www.education.gg/YSYC). The reality is that the evidence on the benefits, or otherwise, of selective as compared to non-selective systems is inconclusive when solely considering overall academic attainment (what results are achieved).

What we are proposing addresses the difficulties that have been highlighted within our current system, puts the needs of our children at the heart of the system and will ensure that all children will have the same chance to be successful.

6. What you are really recommending is a comprehensive system which is perceived by some to not be successful in England.

We have an excellent opportunity to provide something different and better in Guernsey. We do not have to follow UK education policies and are free to develop a system that suits the Bailiwick's needs and will provide the best solution for all our children and young people.

We are aware that for every individual who wants to remove the 11 plus, there will be someone else who supports it. We accept that we will not be able to please everybody with our proposals.

However, it is important to recognise that we have an exciting opportunity to create an education system that reflects not just our core values but the States of Guernsey's objectives articulated in the Social Policy Plan, to provide '*a social environment and culture where there is active and engaged citizenship... equality of opportunity, social inclusion and social justice*', at the same time as driving standards up for all our children.

7. What difference would we notice?

Firstly, pupils in Year 6 will be able to concentrate on their learning (maths, English, science, IT etc.) without the added distraction of the 11 plus process. Year 6 teachers will be able to focus on learning rather than the administration and preparation for the 11 plus tests and the stress and anxiety experienced by many children at this young age will be a thing of the past.

At the end of their primary education children will transfer, with the majority of their friends and classmates, to their feeder secondary school.

We are proposing:

Les Beaucamps Site	Les Varendes Site (currently the Grammar School)	St Sampson's/ Baubigny Site	La Mare de Carteret Site
Castel Primary School	Amherst Primary School	Vale Primary School	La Mare de Carteret Primary School
St Martin's Primary School	Vauvert Primary School	Hautes Capelles Primary School	La Houquette Primary School
			Forest Primary School
Notre Dame Catholic Primary School <i>(final allocation of secondary school site would be either of the above and would depend on where they live and places available)</i>		St Mary and St Michael Catholic Primary School <i>(final allocation of secondary school site would be either of the above and would depend on where they live and places available)</i>	

There will be very little difference in Years 7, 8 and 9 (Key Stage 3) where all students will have access to the same curriculum as they do now. The main difference will be that each site will have a broader range of abilities. To cater for this, students will be organised into sets for some subjects depending on their ability, aptitude and performance. They may be in different sets for different subjects and students will move up and down sets to ensure that those of higher ability are stretched and challenged and those who need extra help and support receive it.

During Year 9 students will need to start thinking about their pathways/options for Key Stage 4. This happens now. The difference will be that all students will have access to a much wider range of options thanks to the benefit of being one large school (across 4 sites). For instance, one or two sites could offer extended maths options or three separate sciences but these courses will be open to all students with an interest and aptitude in these areas, not just those who had passed a selection test at age 11, as is the case now.

Another one or two sites may specialise in languages offering a greater breadth of choice at Key Stage 4. This could be developed in other areas, for example sport or performing arts or to broaden vocational options.

Selection to individual pathways/options at KS4 will be based on guided discussion between school staff, students and their parents/carers overseen by the school senior management team and informed by the student's aptitude, ability, past performance, potential and preference.

There will be guided discussion with all stakeholders to ensure the choice of pathway is the

right one for them and will allow them to progress successfully.

Dependent on their individual pathway, students may:

- Remain at their current secondary site for all subjects
- Study the majority of subjects at their current site but move for one or more options, or
- Change secondary site if the majority of their options or specialist subjects are based at another site.

Specialist staff could also move between sites where necessary.

All of this will be led by an Executive Headteacher, supported by a Board of Governors.

Students will not initially notice any real difference with regards to post-16 education, although there will be enhanced collaboration between the sixth form centre, which will remain on the Les Varendes site, and the College of Further Education. Students will be able to mix and match courses, where desirable.

8. What about the Colleges?

We cannot look at the future structure of secondary and post-16 education without considering the grant-aided Colleges – The Ladies' College, Elizabeth College and Blanchelande College.

We believe it is important that the 3 grant-aided Colleges continue to thrive in the Island. They make a valuable contribution to the Island's education system, they offer choice to parents and could be considered an important economic enabler which assists the recruitment of skilled professionals to the Island who expect the option of a 'private' education for their children.

Under our proposals the current system of awarding special places at the Colleges would cease for new students from September 2019 as the 11 plus process would no longer exist. However, we would still wish those of lesser means to have the opportunity to access a place at the Colleges.

We are proposing that we explore, with the Colleges, the possibility of reducing the level of funding over time. If the States support our proposals we would work with the Colleges to implement a bursary scheme to financially support (in full or in part) those who would otherwise be unable to attend the Colleges.

The current funding agreement runs until July 2019 and so we are proposing to work with the Colleges over the coming months and to bring proposals back to the States no later than June 2017.

9. Are you closing the Grammar School?

No. We are not proposing to close any school site. The current Grammar School will become part of the new single secondary school which will be spread over 4 sites. It will cater for 11-16 year old students as it does now and the site will also provide A level and International Baccalaureate qualifications for all the Island's 16-18 year olds, as it does now.

The difference is that from September 2019 the intake into the Les Varendes site will be from the feeder primary schools of Amherst, Vauvert and part of Notre Dame rather than an Island-wide catchment selected through the 11 plus tests.

Children who are already at the Grammar School in July 2019 would remain as part of a

selective intake at the Les Varendes site for the rest of their 11-16 education.
10. Are you closing any schools?
<p>We were directed by the States to consider options for moving to a three school/site option. This would mean closing one of our current secondary school sites.</p> <p>We have carefully considered whether this would be possible or even desirable and we are against moving to three 11-16 sites because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is not what the public wants (as evidenced by the public consultation responses). • It provides very little flexibility for the future (should student numbers rise). • It is very disruptive through the transition period and may adversely affect our students' education. • This level of disruption and change on top of the Department's proposals would add too much risk. • It would put in jeopardy the unique and very important level of pastoral care which has historically been such an important part of Guernsey's secondary education and which flows from relatively small, easily managed educational sites. • Many of the economies of scale which might be assumed to derive from closing one school potentially will be achieved or even exceeded by restructuring the four existing schools into one school, on four sites managed by an Executive Head and governed by a Guernsey form of local management of schools. <p>To answer this question, no we are not proposing to close any school sites.</p>
11. What does this mean for the rebuild of the La Mare de Carteret Schools?
<p>Under our proposals the rebuild of the La Mare de Carteret schools will begin later this year, including a 600 pupil High School (with the flexibility to extend to 960 in the future should this be required), a 420 pupil Primary School, pre-school nursery, enhanced sports facilities, the communication and autism centre and community facilities.</p> <p>If the States agree, the construction of the schools should be complete by September 2018 with the sports facilities and parking completed by September 2019.</p> <p>The delay to the start of construction does mean that the overall cost of the redevelopment has increased because of the impact of building inflation (an increase of between £3 and £4M). However, the resulting review of the design means that it will be much easier and more cost effective to extend La Mare de Carteret High School in the future should that be necessary (eg because of increasing student numbers etc).</p>
12. What about our special schools?
<p>Children who attend our secondary special schools, Le Murier and Les Voies, do so due to Formal Assessment and Determination of Need which identifies special school provision as the most appropriate means of meeting their individual needs. We are not proposing to change this.</p> <p>We are proposing that Le Murier and Les Voies will be 'associate sites' of the Guernsey mainstream school enhancing the links between mainstream and special school provision. This will enable greater professional collaboration between staff with learning opportunities</p>

available in both settings. We would also expect to develop further opportunities for individual students to access alternative courses, social or enhancement activities, in mainstream school. This, for example, is currently being further developed between Le Murier and St Sampson's High School.

Further consultation is needed with our special schools, their staff, students and parents to confirm the exact details of the relationship between them and the new mainstream school.

13. What's going to happen in Alderney?

It is important that our children and young people in Alderney and our staff at St Anne's School are, as far as possible, able to benefit from our proposals.

At the moment a small number of students sit the 11 plus tests, transfer to Guernsey and live with host families for the duration of their secondary education. This would no longer be possible under our proposals.

Due to the location and nature of St Anne's School, we consider that it will need an individual approach and therefore possibly different governance arrangements from the secondary federation/ single school. We are proposing that St Anne's be an 'associate site' of the Guernsey school and will, as far as is practicable, benefit from the economies of scale and significantly increased levels of expertise encompassed within the single structure.

In practical terms this means that St Anne's staff will be able to benefit from further professional development opportunities with staff in Guernsey, both at primary and secondary level. We will also be exploring the use of technology to enable the maintenance and further development of a broad curriculum offer for 14-16 year-olds in Alderney.

Creative solutions such as shared staffing and technology are being developed to ensure the inclusion of St Anne's students, as far as possible, in opportunities provided for students in Guernsey.

14. What will happen in Year 6?

This will not begin to have an impact in our primary schools until those children currently in Year 3 are in Year 6. Younger pupils will follow on in subsequent years.

From September 2018, pupils in Year 6 will be able to concentrate on completing their Key Stage 2 learning at their primary school without the distraction of having to sit the 11 plus tests mid-way through the year and then having to wait several weeks before receiving the results confirming which secondary school they will be going to in the next few months.

From September 2019, the majority of children and parents will know when they start primary school which secondary school they are likely to move to in Year 7 – primary schools will feed into named secondary schools based on catchment areas. This early knowledge will help improve transition between the primary and secondary phases of education.

Children will transfer to secondary school with the majority of their friends and be able to access a common Key Stage 3 curriculum including all the usual core subjects such as English, maths, science, a language, ICT etc.

15. What will happen to pupils at the Grammar School once selection at 11 ends in 2018?

All existing pupils will stay at their current schools. The changes will be phased in gradually for

pupils transitioning to secondary education from September 2018 and each year after.
16. Pupils who start Year 6 in September 2017 will still sit the 11 plus tests – what will happen to their education?
<p>If our proposals are approved, pupils currently in Year 4 will be the last cohort to sit the 11 plus tests when they are in Year 6. Whatever school they are selected to attend in Year 7 will be where they will complete their 11-16 education.</p> <p>This means that it will take a number of years before the full transition is completed (September 2023). Pupils selected to attend the Grammar School before September 2018 will continue in their selective intake. Pupils selected to attend their catchment High School before September 2018 will continue at that school until they complete Year 11 and pupils selected to attend one of the grant-aided Colleges will complete their education at that school (up to Year 11 at Blanchelande and Year 13 at The Ladies' and Elizabeth Colleges).</p>
17. My child needs extra help with their learning, will they still get it under your new system?
Yes.
18. My child is 'gifted and talented', won't they be held back by other children who are not as quick to learn?
No. Our proposals will continue to provide opportunities to stretch and challenge all children, including those identified as 'gifted and talented', as currently happens in our primary schools.
19. Will my child still be able to access 14-16 courses at the College of Further Education?
Yes. The provision of vocational and applied options at the College of Further Education will continue to be part of the Key Stage 4 offer.
20. I am worried about the impact of disruptive children on my child's education.
All our schools have robust procedures, experienced staff and high expectations of pupil behaviour. One of the benefits of a single school across 4 sites will be the ability to share excellent practice more effectively, allocate resources for support where needed and intervene at as early a stage as possible. The enhanced transition process from primary to secondary will also help.
21. Will my child have to move sites at 14 (start of Year 10)?
Moving site will depend on the pathway each child follows. They will have the opportunity to move depending on their individual Key Stage 4 pathways and options. As previously stated, final choice of pathway would be based on guided discussion between school staff, students and their parents/carers, over seen by the school senior management team and informed by the student's aptitude, ability, past performance, potential and preference.
22. Will my child still be able to get a place at one of the Colleges in the future?
We will be working closely with the Colleges to see how States funding could continue to support places at the Colleges for those who are unable to afford the fees without financial

assistance.

23. My child is sitting the 11+ this year or is due to sit it in the next couple of years – how will this affect them?

Children will continue to be selected for admission to secondary school this year and up until July 2018 for entry into secondary education in September 2018.

We are not proposing to introduce any changes until the start of the new academic year in September 2019. This is because we need to carefully plan for the implementation of the new structure and we need to wait for the new school to be built at La Mare de Carteret and the new funding agreement with the Colleges to be in place.

This means that the first group to be affected by any changes, should they be approved by the States, are those currently in Year 3.

Anyone who is selected for a special place at one of the grant-aided Colleges between now and July 2019 will continue to have their place funded until the end of their time at that school.

24. What about brothers and sisters?

Wherever possible, and where there is space, we try to keep siblings together. Obviously, at the moment younger siblings of those selected to the Grammar School through the 11 plus do not necessarily attend the same school.

Under our proposals it is possible that younger siblings of those selected to the Grammar School site prior to September 2019 may not be able to attend the same school because admissions would be based on feeder primary school.

25. What about school uniforms – will I have to buy another one if my child moves to a different site for their Key Stage 4 options?

This level of detail will be worked out in discussion with the four sites once the States have made a decision about the way forward. It is possible that all sites could have a common uniform but students could be distinguished through a different colour tie or badge. Again this would not be introduced before September 2019 and may only apply to new students starting from this date.

26. If you only have one school what's going to happen to inter-school sports competitions and other such events?

Inter-school sports competitions and other events are an important part of every day school life. Under our proposals for a single secondary school across 4 sites, these sort of competitions and events would all continue with teams representing each of the sites.

27. How are students going to move between sites for different subjects – parents will be driving their children all over the Island?

Guernsey is a small Island and a Key Stage 4 timetable will be structured which allows for movement between sites when required. This could be through teachers changing sites or groups of students. The timetabling would accommodate student/staff movements at the start or end of the day and during break and lunchtimes, if required. We are looking at introducing a shuttle bus service which would operate at these times between the different sites for children in years 10 and 11.

Through skilled timetabling, these movements can be kept to a minimum.
28. I am concerned about the disruption and uncertainty the new proposals will cause for children currently in preschool or primary education.
<p>Whilst it is always unsettling to have to adapt to change and new ways of working, under the Education Department's proposals there will be less disruption and uncertainty than under the current 11 plus system and young people should have a greater say in their educational pathway. Minimising disruption is one of the reasons why the Education Department is recommending retaining teaching 11-16 students across four sites.</p>
29. What about the impact on staff?
<p>We are not expecting to make any staff redundant as a result of our proposals.</p> <p>Any impact on staff will be gradual. The main impact is likely to be that more staff may be required to teach at more than one site and across a wider ability range. However, this evolutionary process is something that is happening under the current Guernsey federation arrangements anyway. There will also be other positive changes, for example, more staff may have the opportunity to teach across the whole 11-18 age range, where opportunities arise.</p> <p>Staff will also benefit from sharing expertise, enhanced professional development and greater opportunities for collaborative working.</p> <p>We will be working in partnership with our staff and the staff associations on the implementation of our proposals.</p>
30. What will happen if I move house at any time over the next few years?
<p>We are not proposing to change our current admission process if you move house between now and September 2019. This means that if you move house at any time between now and then and your house is in a different school catchment area you may want your child to attend the school of your new catchment area, or you may want them to stay at their current school. In practice this means your child may move (if there is space in your new catchment school), or they may stay at their existing school.</p> <p>We will be implementing a new admissions policy from September 2019 which will take into account the new proposals for 'feeder primary schools' and defined catchment areas. We will publish the detail of this new admissions policy well in advance of September 2019.</p>
31. Will you have enough space in your schools if the population increases?
<p>This is one of the main reasons why we are seeking to keep four mainstream sites. As well as retaining many of the advantages of smaller schools, retaining four sites means we will have the flexibility to cope with any future fluctuations in the Island's school-age population.</p> <p>The public response to the consultation was also overwhelmingly in favour of retaining four schools/sites.</p>

32. Why are you proposing to make these changes, why not leave everything as it is?

Education systems in all societies need to change in order to effectively reflect social, cultural and technological developments over time. We have an exciting opportunity to introduce a new structure which will help improve educational outcomes, whilst offering all of our children and young people the chance to realise their full potential.

We recognise though that excellent educational outcomes will only be achieved where there is excellent leadership and we are committed to devolving operational management and decision-making to the professionals who are responsible for its delivery under a Guernsey system of Local Management of Schools.

We also recognise that the quality of schools is not simply about their size and structure. To ensure we provide our learners with the best opportunity to fulfil their potential, it is important that we continue to attract the best headteachers, teachers, lecturers, learning support assistants and other staff and to support their development to ensure they are able to lead, innovate and continually evaluate their impact for the benefit of all our learners.

33. How much is all of this going to cost?

The Education Department's rationale for its preferred option and proposals is predominantly driven by educational rather than financial objectives. This reflects the views expressed by those who took part in the public consultation who indicated that value for money was the least important factor for them.

There may be some additional costs associated with the appointment of an executive headteacher to lead the new single organisation. We are also anticipating that there may be some additional transport costs, certainly for the first four years as we transition to the new system. However ultimately through potential economies of scale in transforming four schools into one there will be real and long term savings in the delivery of secondary education in Guernsey.

We have tried to give realistic estimates for these additional costs (approx. £460,000 per year initially) but as stated above we anticipate that this additional expenditure would be recouped, or even exceeded, by operational efficiencies over time.

34. Where can I find out more?

Our Policy Letter, a copy of our presentation and other supporting information is available on our website www.education.gg/ysycproposals

You can also attend one of our Public Meetings at St Sampson's High School at 7.30pm on Monday 8th and Monday 15th February.

If you have any further questions please don't hesitate to contact the Education Department on 733000 or via email at office@education.gov.gg