



Equality in the Jersey Education System

Report of the Jersey Community Relations Trust

November 2014

Equality in Education

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Introduction

The Jersey Community Relations Trust (the Trust) is established and funded by the States of Jersey.

The Aim of the Trust as set out in its constitution is to eliminate discrimination on any ground by promoting good relations between all members of society and seeking to achieve equality of treatment and opportunity within the community.

In furtherance of this Aim the Trust commissions research into equality issues that will inform and help frame government policy.

Education is a key determinant of life chances allowing individuals to gain the skills, confidence and experience that they require in order to have enriching and economically successful lives.

The Trust believes that it is important to examine the extent to which there is equality in the Jersey education system in relation to different social groups. In particular, the Trust believes that equality in relation to nationality, children with special educational needs (SENs), gender and socio-economic status should be scrutinised.

The Trust partnered in this project with Professor Tony Kelly, Head of the Southampton Education School at the University of Southampton and an expert in educational effectiveness and improvement. The Trust is immensely grateful to Professor Kelly and his colleagues for their work on this project and also to the University of Southampton who paid a majority of the research costs.

The main conclusions of Professor Kelly's report are set out below. A complete copy of the report and an abridged version are available on the Trust's website.

www.jerseycommunityrelations.org.

As a complement to Professor Kelly's report the Trust sets out below:-

- **An overview of the Jersey education system.**
- **A summary of the data collected by the Department for Education, Sport and Culture (ESC).**
- **A discussion of how to measure equality in education and the theoretical basis for the research.**
- **A summary of the report findings.**
- **The Trust's recommendations for further research and action to be taken by the States.**

Overview of the Jersey Education System

Jersey offers parents limited choice over primary and secondary schooling. In broad terms only those parents with the ability to pay school fees upwards of £1,200 per term are able to exercise choice. Even then, choice is constrained by other factors including gender, academic ability and religion. Parents who cannot afford to pay school fees (plus the other costs such as school uniforms and equipment) have very limited choice as to the school their child attends and will be allocated a place at the local catchment area school. This situation persists until the age of 14 when children with the requisite academic ability can enter Hautlieu School and, therefore, have one additional choice of school.

Primary

There are 31 primary schools on the Island; 9 are fee-paying and the remainder are free. Two of the fee-paying primary schools are run by ESC and the remainder are private schools. Four of the fee-paying primary schools are single sex (including the two run by ESC).

Places at the 22 non-fee-paying primary schools are allocated on the basis of the following criteria:-

1. Children with a SEN who must access a specific school.
2. A sibling in the school in year reception to year 6.
3. Live in primary school catchment area.
4. Live in secondary school catchment area.
5. Sibling in year 6.
6. Have other requests supported by a good educational reason for attending a non-catchment school.

Parents who are not satisfied with the choice of school allocated to their child can appeal the decision. A request for an appeal must be submitted in writing to ESC. If the director decides that there are adequate grounds a hearing will be granted. An appeal panel is convened. The decision of the panel is final. If the parent feels that the hearing was not fair a complaint can be made to the Jersey Complaints Board.

There are two States fee-paying primary schools, Jersey College for Girls Prep (JCG Prep) and Victoria College Prep (VCP). JCG Prep is mixed in years Reception, 1 and 2 (key stage one) and girls only in years 3 to 6 (key stage 2). Priority entry to JCG Prep is given to children with siblings at JCG Prep and VCP. All other places are allocated on the basis of a random draw, but are offered subject to an informal assessment of a child's development and progress. Entry to JCG Prep at the start of key stage 2 is on the basis of academic selection.

VCP is for boys and teaches only key stage 2. Entry to VCP is on a selective academic basis. The entry procedure includes various tests and teacher assessments.

The fees for JCG Prep and VCP are approximately £1,500 per term. The school websites indicate that some financial assistance is available.

The seven private fee-paying primary schools include three Catholic schools; FCJ (mixed), Beaulieu Convent School (girls) and De La Salle College (boys). None of the schools have explicit academic selection criteria. It is not clear to what extent they take children that require extra support or have SEN.

FCJ and Beaulieu publish their selection criteria on their website. Priority is given to children of staff or children with siblings at the school. Thereafter, priority is given to Catholics with the sub criteria being (i) parent who attended the school, (ii) sibling at other Catholic school on the Island and (iii) parent teaching at another Catholic school on the Island). Thereafter non-Catholics are admitted with the same sub-criteria applying. The fees for FCJ are approximately £1,200 per term. The fees for Beaulieu are approximately, £1,600 per term and some financial assistance is available.

The admission criteria for De La Salle College includes religion, brothers at the College, alumni in the family, sisters at Beaulieu and parents' professions. The fees for De La Salle are approximately £1,700 per term

Helvetia House School is a single sex school for girls. Entry criteria are not indicated on the school website. Fees are approximately £1,400 per term.

St Christopher's School is a pre-prep mixed school for 3 to 7 year olds. The entry criteria and fees are not indicated on the school website.

St George's Preparatory School is a co-educational school that takes children from nursery to age 11. The admission criteria are not indicated on the school website. The fees increase with age. The fees for year 6 are approximately £4,000 per term. Some bursaries are available.

St Michael's Preparatory School is a co-educational school that takes children from nursery to age 13. Fees increase with age. The fees per term for year 8 are approximately £4,400. The admission criteria are not indicated on the school website.

Secondary

Jersey has nine secondary schools, seven of which are run by ESC.

Four of the States schools (Les Quennevais, Grainville, Haute Vallee, and Le Rocquier) are non-fee-paying, non-academically selective and co-educational. The entry criteria for these schools are: -

1. Have a special educational need and must access a specific school.
2. Live in the school catchment area.
3. Have a sibling in years 7 to 10.
4. Attend a primary school in the secondary catchment area.
5. Have parents who live or work in the catchment area.
6. Have a sibling in year 11.
7. Have other requests supported by a good educational reason for attending a non-catchment school.

One of the States non-fee-paying schools (Hautlieu) is academically selective and caters for years 10 to 13. The minimum criteria for entry at year 10 are:

- an average cognitive ability test (CAT) score of 109 or greater; and
- an autumn term Y9 report with minimum predicted level sixes (B) in English, Maths and at least four other subjects.

The States operate two single-sex, fee-paying, academically selective secondary schools namely Jersey College for Girls (JCG) and Victoria College (VC). Entrance to both schools is on the basis of an entrance exam. Fees are approximately £1,500 per term for both schools. Both schools offer some financial assistance.

There are two private secondary schools, Beaulieu Convent School (girls) and De La Salle College (boys). Neither school is academically selective. Both schools give preference to children at their respective primary schools and FCJ Primary. Thereafter, preference is given to children of staff, children with siblings at the school, Catholics then non-Catholics. Fees for both schools are approximately £1,700 per term. Beaulieu provides some financial assistance.

Special Educational Needs Schools

The majority of SEN children are educated in mainstream schools with additional support being provided in the school environment. Certain non-fee paying schools have specialist units attached. For example, Rouge Bouillon primary school supports children with communication disorders and speech and language disorders. Bel Royal primary school supports children with physical and medical disabilities and children with speech and language disorders. Les Quennevais, Haute Vallee, Le Rocquier and Grainville all have specialist SEN support.

Where it is not possible to meet the needs of a child in a mainstream school the child can spend time at a specialist school either on a full-time or part-time basis. There are two special schools on the Island. Mont a L'Abbe supports children with severe or profound learning difficulties at primary and secondary level. D'Hautree House supports secondary age children with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. In addition, there is a secondary level alternative curriculum available for children who are not engaging in learning in mainstream schools.

Data Collection

It is important to differentiate between data that measures pupil attainment and data that measures inherent ability or intelligence.

Intelligence Tests

Inherent ability or intelligence is measured by the administration of cognitive ability tests (CATs). The tests typically involve verbal reasoning (English), non-verbal reasoning (science) and quantitative reasoning (mathematics). The scores are standardised against age, which allows for comparison against national benchmarks. The results range from 70 to 140 and the average band extends from 90 to 110.

In Jersey all children undertake CATs in year 5 (age 9-10). The tests are repeated in years 7 and 9. The results are provided to parents. The scores are used to predict the level of performance a child is likely to achieve.

Measuring Attainment

Pupil achievement in curriculum subjects can be measured by formal and informal tests and by teacher assessment. Informal tests and teacher assessments are moderated to ensure that they are consistent across schools and with national standards in the UK.

Data is collected by ESC in relation to pupil achievement at age 5 in the form of teacher assessments that look at the early years foundation stage profile.

ESC also collects data on pupil attainment at the end of key stage 1 (age 7) and key stage 2 (age 11) in the form of teacher assessments in the areas of maths, reading, writing and literacy. These assessments measure achievement against the curriculum and are subject to external moderation to ensure consistency of assessment across schools. Further moderated teacher assessments are done at the end of key stage 3 (age 14).

The results on pupil attainment are translated into National Curriculum levels, which are UK standards. The levels start at level 1 and increase to level 6 at the end of primary school and at the end of key stage 3 (age 14). Each level has three sub levels, c, b and a. At the end of year 1 the average level of achievement is 1a/2c. At the end of year 6 the average level of achievement is 4b.

Pupils take GCSE or other vocational qualifications at the end of key stage 4 (age 16).

Value Added

Differences between CAT scores and National Curriculum levels can be used as a way of measuring school performance or value added. For example, if a child enters secondary school with average CAT scores, but goes on to achieve above average results in his or her GCSEs this suggests that the school has performed well in relation to this particular pupil.

Similarly, increases in National Curriculum levels can be an indicator of value added. For example, if a child joins a school with below expected National Curriculum levels at the end of key stage 1, but goes on to achieve expected levels at the end of key stage 2 this could suggest that the school had added value to the pupil.

Personal Data

The Education Department collects data on gender and special educational needs (SENs). The Department does not collect data on race, nationality, housing status, length of residence in Jersey, socio-economic status or any indicator of child poverty.

Measuring Equality in Education

Measuring equality or disadvantage in education requires identification of a relevant standard by which equality is to be measured. In countries such as the UK equality in education is often judged by reference to the exam results (typically GCSEs) of certain groups in society. Other standards are changes in pupil attainment over time, employment levels, progression to further and higher education and social mobility.

Such an approach requires the relevant data to be identified and collected. In some cases the relevant data is easy to identify. For example, research on gender equality requires the sex of the pupil to be recorded. Nationality is more complicated as length of residence in Jersey, socio-economic status and English as an additional language (EAL) can impact heavily on the attainment of children of certain nationalities. A child that enters the Jersey school system at the age of 14 with little or no English is unlikely to perform as well as a child that has been educated in Jersey since the age of 4.

In the UK the socio-economic status of a child is generally measured by whether the child receives free school meals. Eligibility for free school meals is based on eligibility for other welfare benefits. There is no scheme of free school meals in Jersey and currently ESC has no indicator of child poverty that can be used to measure equality in relation to low-income families.

Measuring equality on the basis of exam results can be problematic in relation to children with SEN especially where the SEN relates to cognitive ability. Other problems associated with measuring equality on the basis of exam results include the fact that schools may have different policies on whether to enter pupils for examinations and vocational and academic qualifications are difficult to compare.

Given the lack of personal data the Trust agreed with the researchers an alternative method of measuring equality that looks at the opportunities on offer and the freedom of individuals to pursue choices that reflect their values and interests. The research assesses how pupils, parents and teachers feel about the educational opportunities on offer. The emphasis is on whether people have the ability to live their life in the ways that they regard as important rather than a narrow focus on exam results.

The research is divided into three sections; choices, opportunities and wellbeing:-

- Choice looks at the provision of information about three possible choices; which school to attend, which subjects to take at secondary level and extra-curricular activities. In order to exercise choice parents and pupils need access to information that is relevant, accurate and of high quality. People cannot make the best choices in life unless they have sufficient information about the available options.
- Opportunity looks at the extent to which pupils are able to exercise their desired choices in relation to school, subject selection and extra-curricular activities. The research is based on the attitudes, perceptions and experiences of pupils, parents, teachers and other stakeholders. It does not measure whether opportunities were actually realised, but sheds light on how pupils, parents and teachers feel about the limitations that exist on these important life decisions. Pupils, parents and teachers were also asked about their perceptions of the opportunities that had been opened to them as a result of their education for example their ability to find a job or access further education.
- Wellbeing is a subjective assessment of the outcomes that a pupil expects to achieve from his or her education both over the shorter and longer term. Because it is a personal or subjective evaluation it measures individual attitudes, opinions and perceptions about what a pupil is likely to achieve from his or her education. The chapter on wellbeing focuses in particular on the experiences of pupils with SENs and EAL pupils. The latter is an indirect way of looking at equality in relation to different nationalities on the Island. This is particularly important given that according to the report nearly 20 per cent of the population were born in countries in which English is not the first language.

The field research was undertaken in 2013. Over 1,000 people participated in the study including almost 800 pupils and 75 teachers. Some participants completed an online questionnaire and some spoke to the researchers in depth. The researchers also spoke to staff at ESC, school governors and members of the business community. The Trust is grateful to everyone who participated in the study.

For example, in 2010, the Equality and Human Rights Commission in the UK produced a report entitled “How Fair is Britain?” Chapter 10 of the report considers educational attainment across different sections of society including gender, race, children in care, socio-economic status, disability and sexual orientation.

Summary of the Report Findings

This sections sets out the main conclusions of the research as set out in the executive summary of the report.

Choice

- A catchment area system for non-fee paying primary and secondary schools was found to constrain choice in practice, although parents and pupils still sought information on the options available across the system.
- Written information was widely distributed by schools at both primary and secondary level, suggesting that – regardless of the catchment system – schools endeavored to communicate effectively with prospective pupils and parents.
- The vast majority of pupils and parents used school visits and open days. These were found to be a particularly popular and valuable source of information.
- Word-of-mouth appeared to be extremely important for circulating information about schools in Jersey, although this raises questions about equal access to information for those with narrower social networks; for example, recent migrants.
- Official information, especially on the internet, was perceived to be inadequate by some parents, who wanted greater transparency regarding school performance.

Opportunity

- Pupils and parents generally felt in control of their decision-making, although the catchment area system was acknowledged to constrain the opportunity to choose between state schools, and the appeal process was seen as difficult to navigate.
- Pupils rarely expressed strong feelings over school choice and few would have preferred to attend an alternative fee-paying or non-catchment school.
- Some secondary pupils felt pressure from teachers when making subject choices and many complained that timetabling restricted their choice of optional subjects.
- Secondary schools were praised for providing a broad range of extracurricular activities; primary schools were seen to offer fewer opportunities in this regard.
- Pupils and parents defended the quality of non-fee paying secondary schools in Jersey, although it was felt that (some) state secondary schools suffered unfairly from reputational stigma surrounding standards of behaviour and academic achievement.
- Employers suggested that state schools would benefit from stronger links with business and that school leavers' skills could be better matched to the labour market.

Wellbeing

- Parents and pupils generally felt satisfied with their schools, which were felt to provide a supportive and inclusive learning environment, although transitions between primary and secondary school constituted a source of anxiety for pupils.
- Some secondary pupils felt that state schools could do more to challenge them academically, while others complained of disruption in class.
- Primary and secondary schools were seen to offer good support for pupils with special educational needs, although parents were often required to initiate support for their children.
- Schools appeared to be responding well to the needs of pupils for whom English was an additional language, although parents could benefit from additional language support.
- Fears were expressed over inclusion and cohesion within Jersey's wider community and the extent to which this impacted on pupils from minority backgrounds.
- Parents held high aspirations towards their children's education, although some were concerned about the costs of higher education. In contrast, teachers appeared more cautious and suggested that some pupils' motivation and ability hindered their progress.
- Both primary and secondary pupils felt confident about their futures and held aspirations to exceed their parents' level of education and/or employment status.

Recommendations

The research suggests that there is much to commend about Jersey schools. Despite the limited choice imposed by the catchment area system for non-fee-paying schools at both primary and secondary level, pupils appear to be actively engaged with their education and there is an overall picture of satisfaction. The majority of state school pupils and parents felt that the non-fee-paying schools offer equivalent educational opportunities to private schooling suggesting that low income families are not disadvantaged in their education, although this was challenged by some private school pupils.

The Trust was particularly interested in the treatment of SEN and EAL children. The report indicates that there have been significant improvements in meeting the needs of SEN children. The report concludes that while the experiences of individual families vary, non-fee-paying primary and secondary schools are well adapted to meeting the needs of these children. By contrast, there was a perception that fee-paying schools do not provide equivalent levels of SEN support.

The report suggests that support for EAL children is generally good although there is room for improvement. There is a need for more translated materials, multi-lingual staff and additional support especially in secondary schools. An issue also emerged in the report about support for EAL parents and the need to ensure that all pupils have equal access to homework support.

Performance Data

School choice is constrained by the catchment area system, the ability to pay fees, academic selection and religion. Within these constraints the ability to exercise an effective choice depends upon the availability of relevant and accurate data. Written information is widely distributed by schools and open days and schools visits are a popular and valuable source of information. However, there is a lack of independent official data in relation to school performance.

There is a real concern that the lack of independent data on school performance may have contributed to the presence of a reputational stigma attaching to some non-fee-paying secondary schools as regards standards of behaviour and academic achievement. This stigma could have a negative impact on the wellbeing of these pupils. Equally worryingly, this stigma may have permeated the labour market thereby affecting the opportunities that the pupils of these schools may enjoy later on in life. To ensure that pupils and parents can exercise effective choice in school selection and to remove any unwarranted stigma affecting some schools the States should publish independent performance data on each school.

Recommendation 1

At least once every five years the States should publish an independent report on every school in Jersey. The report should look at the quality of the teaching, pupil motivation, resources, subject choices for secondary schools, the range of extra-curricular activities, examination results, vocational qualifications, value added, bullying and the behaviour of pupils. The provision for SEN and EAL students should also be assessed, as should the extent to which the school accommodates the needs of disabled students. The report should be in a similar format for each school and should be published on the internet in English, Portuguese and Polish.

Despite the limitations and difficulties associated with measuring equality on the basis of a particular outcome the Trust feels that the States should collect data on the outcomes of particular groups to see if they are being disadvantaged across the school system as a whole.

Recommendation 2

The States should collect data on the colour, nationality and ethnic origin of each student and should devise a standard for identifying children from low-income families. Every year the States should publish data that shows pupil attainment across the Island broken down by gender, nationality, ethnic origin, pupils from low-income families, EAL and SEN.

Subject Choices

In a number of secondary schools option subjects are organised in blocks. It is difficult for pupils to study two subjects if they are in the same block. The research identified a real strength of feeling from pupils that the block system limits choice and opportunity and a feeling that some schools offer better blocks than others.

Recommendation 3

The States should ensure that pupils at all schools have an equal ability to study subjects of their choice.

Extra-Curricular Activities

Extra-curricular activities are an important opportunity for children to develop and socialise. The report suggests that the provision of extra-curricular activities is not uniform across primary schools and that some schools struggle to provide a broad range of activities.

Recommendation 4

The States should investigate the provision of extra-curricular activities at primary level and ascertain if there are ways of extending the provision of after school activities at this level for example through the use of parents, volunteers or private providers.

The provision of extra-curricular activities at secondary level was more uniform with no marked difference between fee-paying and non-fee-paying schools. There were some issues raised in relation to the gender disparity in relation to the sports provision for girls, the quality of the instruction and the limited time frame for some activities. Of these, the gender disparity in the range of sports available to girls is the most concerning from an equality perspective.

Recommendation 5

The States should ensure that the provision of extra-curricular sporting activities is broadly comparable for boys and girls taking into account their different interests and participation rates.

EAL Support

Additional support is needed for EAL pupils and their parents.

Recommendation 6

The States should increase the level of support available to EAL pupils and their parents and ensure an equal level of access to help with homework.

SEN Support

There is a perception that fee-paying schools do not offer appropriate levels of support to SEN children.

Recommendation 7

The States should review whether the level of SEN support offered by fee-paying schools and publish the results of the review with a view to those schools putting in place additional support if necessary.

Quiet Place to Study

The report highlights that finding a quiet place to study is an overarching concern. With Jersey's unique housing system and the high cost of housing this is likely to be a particular problem for low-income families and recent immigrants to the Island.

Recommendation 8

The States should review the ability of all students to find somewhere quiet to study and increase provision if necessary eg access to school libraries out of school hours, homework clubs, access to public libraries.

Admissions & Bursaries

Not all schools publish their admissions criteria on their website.

Recommendation 9

All non-catchment schools should be open and transparent about their admissions policy. The policy should be non-discriminatory and comply with all discrimination legislation. There should be a clear statement of the extent to which the school accommodates pupils with EAL, SEN and disabilities. The admissions policy should be published on the school website.

Some fee-paying schools offer bursaries. However, there is insufficient information publicly available about the extent of the bursaries and the criteria by which they are awarded.

Recommendation 10

All fee-paying schools should be transparent about the level of financial support available to pupils and the criteria upon which financial assistance is awarded. The criteria must be non-discriminatory.

Links with Business & Vocational Training

The report suggests that there is considerable scope for secondary schools, especially non-fee paying schools, to forge better links with employers and thereby enhance the job prospects of those students and potentially to reduce the stigma attaching to certain schools.

Recommendation 11

The States should support all secondary schools, but particularly the non-fee-paying secondary schools to establish better links with local employers.

The report suggests that there is insufficient priority given to vocational training and that this could again limit job opportunities for pupils, particularly pupils who are less academically able.

Recommendation 12

The States should review the provision of vocational training to ensure that all pupils are able to maximise their prospects in the work place.

Conclusion

The final section of Professor Kelly's report looks at the future; how parents, pupils and teachers see the future, their confidence in the future and the obstacles that might stop pupils from reaching their goals.

The majority of primary and secondary pupils reported being confident about the future and their ability to achieve their hopes and ambitions. A majority of parents and teachers shared this confidence.

Nonetheless, a variety of constraints on the future were reported. Primary students cited finding a quiet place to study, staying motivated and a lack of information as the most likely limitations. Only a small proportion of primary parents reported obstacles; the few cited include children's motivation, parent's own lack of knowledge and a lack of understanding about what a school can offer. Primary teachers reported a variety of issues including receiving lower than expected grades, changing idea or direction, lack of support from parents, financial restrictions and not wishing to appear different.

A similar pattern emerged at secondary level with secondary students reporting finding a quiet place to study and personal motivation as constraints for the future. Parents reported few obstacles, although over a quarter cited their own lack of motivation as a problem. Obstacles cited by secondary teachers include a lack of pupil motivation, financial restrictions and a lack of knowledge to achieve goals.

As this part of the report highlights, education is a shared endeavour between schools, parents and pupils. Making sure that children from all sections of the community have the chance to

fulfil their aspirations for the future requires some improvement from schools, which in turn requires support from the States, but it also requires hard work and commitment from pupils and parents.

Finally, the report highlights the difficulties of fostering inclusive attitudes in schools, especially in relation to EAL children, when there are negative or discriminatory attitudes towards inclusion within the broader community of Jersey. It is hoped that the introduction of the Discrimination Law will help change public perceptions and that schools will review their practices to ensure that there is equality of treatment and opportunity for all sections of the community.

**Trustees of the Jersey
Community Relations Trust**
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