

# Big Education Conversation

## Findings on a Page

The Big Education Conversation was launched in October 2019 to find out what people think about education in Jersey. Through our conversations with children and young people, parents and carers, teachers, businesses and voluntary and community organisations, we have identified the following themes.

### Your aspirations

You told us that you want Jersey to have a **high-performing** education system that enables each and every student to:

- acquire the knowledge, skills and capabilities they need for work and life;
- have a strong grounding in literacy and numeracy, and digital skills; and
- become well-rounded and resilient individuals with strong social and emotional skills.

You said that we need to focus on **access, quality and equity in education to achieve these aspirations, and supported the following themes as priorities for action:**

**A well-funded education system** that is fair, creates a level playing field between schools and reflects the different types of needs among students.

**A high-quality teaching profession** where teachers are valued, trusted and have autonomy to teach in the way they believe is best for their students. Teachers are committed to their profession but are feeling stretched by its demands. We must prioritise measures to support the teaching profession.

**Strengthen access and inclusion** so that each and every student has the opportunity to learn and achieve regardless of their background or personal circumstances. Jersey's education system is working well for many students, but students with special or complex educational needs require additional support and resources to ensure they can participate successfully in education.

**Invest in high-quality early childhood** environments and experiences that promote children's development and contribute to their future educational attainment and progression.

**Social, emotional and physical health and wellbeing** are important features of a rounded education. Students who are healthy, happy, confident and resilient are better equipped to learn and achieve. Health and wellbeing must be approached as an integral part of the school experience.

**A broad and relevant curriculum** with in-depth subject knowledge on core subjects such as English, maths and science, as well as key literacy and numeracy skills. There should also be a focus on personal and life skills so that students have a rounded education and are prepared for adult life.

There is a desire for students to have greater access to learning opportunities that are tailored to their individual learning needs, styles and pace.

**Vocational study** is an essential part of the education system and students should have the opportunity to study a **mix of academic and vocational subjects**, recognising that many careers today require specialist skills and knowledge. There should be a continued effort to ensure that the skills businesses demand are coordinated with the courses offered to students. People must also be able to acquire or adapt new knowledge and skills throughout their working life. There is a role for adult education in promoting health and wellbeing, and combatting social isolation.

**Give schools greater freedom and flexibility** to make their own decisions such as control over funding and developing innovative teaching and learning practices. This should be backed up by appropriate accountability and governance arrangements to ensure the delivery of Government's education priorities. There is support for clarifying the roles of fee-paying schools and the level of autonomy they have.

Enable parents to access more information about student and school performance; and support them to make informed decisions about their children's education.

Schools are valued parts of their communities; they provide diverse opportunities for students to learn outside of the classroom and pursue their interests, and make available additional support to parents. There is an opportunity to do more by **extending the role of schools in the communities** they serve.



Youth services are an important element of the support wanted by young people. Voluntary and community organisations have positive relationships with schools, providing 'added-value' learning experiences.

Schools must respond to the challenges facing students both in and outside schools, including personal circumstances such as students with experience of care with disabilities; young carers; and from vulnerable families. This involves schools, parents, health professionals and other agencies working collectively to respond effectively to students' needs, improving the help and support available to parents in the home environment.

## Next steps

The findings of the Big Education Conversation will help us decide on the vision and priorities for education in Jersey, focusing on early childhood development; educational attainment and progression; and opportunities for school leavers. It will lead to proposals for immediate actions that we can start now; medium-term actions over the next three years or more; and larger reviews that make proposals for long-term changes to Jersey's education system, which may take 10 or more years to implement.

As this work develops, there will be more opportunities for you to get involved and help shape the future of Jersey's education system.

