REPORT
TO
JERSEY COMMUNITY RELATIONS TRUST
ON
CHOICE, WELL-BEING AND OPPORTUNITY
IN THE
JERSEY SCHOOL SYSTEM

Unabridged Report

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CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

About the research

- This report explores issues of choice, opportunity and wellbeing in Jersey's schools, based on the attitudes, perceptions and experiences of pupils, parents, teachers and other stakeholders.

- The research involved interviews with pupils, parents and teachers from 8 state primary schools, 1 private primary school, 3 state secondary schools and 2 private secondary schools.

- Pupils, parents and teachers from 43 schools and 1 college also completed a questionnaire survey – including 134 primary pupils, 34 primary teachers and 103 parents of primary pupils; and 647 secondary pupils, 41 secondary teachers and 184 parents of secondary pupils.

Choice

- The research investigated the information available on school choice, subject options and extra-curricular activities in primary and secondary schools in Jersey.

- 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 found to be widely distributed by schools at both primary and secondary level, suggesting that – regardless of the catchment system – schools endeavoured to communicate effectively with prospective pupils and parents.

- Open days and school visits were used by the vast majority of pupils and parents, and 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

- The research also explored the opportunities that pupils and parents had to make decisions between schools, subjects and extra-curricular activities, and the extent to which these decisions related to broader educational or employment opportunities.

- 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 extra-curricular 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.

Well-being

- The research provided some additional insights into wellbeing within Jersey's education system; in terms of satisfaction, inclusion and future aspirations.

- 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.

CHAPTER 1: BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

Introduction to the Report

This report explores issues of choice, opportunity, and wellbeing within Jersey's schools. The aim of the study was to investigate the choices and options available to parents and pupils, the opportunities which pupils and parents have to make decisions and pursue their preferred choices, and the extent to which the wellbeing of pupils and their families is affected by these decisions. This research is based on the attitudes, perceptions, and experiences of pupils, parents, teachers, and other stakeholders in Jersey's education system (such as representatives of business or government). We received over a thousand responses to a questionnaire survey and conducted hundreds of in-depth interviews to provide further depth to these insights. This report therefore seeks to reflect the opinions of the people who participated in our research. In doing so, it goes beyond measures of results or outcomes, to instead offer a picture of how ordinary people experience choice, opportunity, and wellbeing within Jersey's schools.

The report is structured as follows: **Chapter One** offers an introduction to the conceptual framework which informed this research and an overview of the existing international research literature on school choice, followed by an outline of the methods used for this research and a breakdown of the characteristics of our research participants. **Chapter Two** explores the question of choice within Jersey's school system, by focusing on the information available to pupils and parents when making choices between schools, subjects, or extra-curricular activities. **Chapter Three** explores the opportunities available to pupils and parents to make and exercise decisions within primary and secondary education, as well as within later life. **Chapter Four** explores wellbeing of pupils within Jersey's schools, focusing on issues ranging from overall satisfaction, to aspirations for the future, and the inclusion of pupils with particular learning needs.

The Conceptual Framework: Choice, Opportunity and Well-Being

This section outlines the conceptual framework which informed the research undertaken for this research. The intention of this outline is to provide readers with an overview of relevant academic thinking and research evidence in this field. It aims to reveal something of how certain theories and ideas were developed and deployed during the conduct of this research.

The capability approach

The theoretical framework used in this research is based on the so-called *capability approach* that was developed by the Nobel Prize-winning economist and philosopher Amartya Sen. The

capability approach is based on the notions of choice, well-being, and opportunity. These go to the heart of quality of life in any social, economic and political system and were developed in Sen's efforts to better understand economic disadvantage. Sen included education as one the key indicators of human development in his capability approach. Schooling impacts on the ability of people to participate meaningfully in society and Sen's capability approach was an important step in raising the importance of education as a component in individual freedom and quality of life. For Sen, the purpose of the capability approach is to fill gaps in our conceptual understanding of self-interest, advantage and well-being as means of evaluating societal outcomes (Sen, 1985b).

It was clear from preliminary discussions with schools and other stakeholders in Jersey that existing ways of thinking about school effectiveness were not delivering credible judgments on the perceived quality of local schooling. There are many different approaches to gauging the effectiveness of a schooling system and how well it serves society: changes in pupil attainment over time; employment levels and progression to further and higher education; and perceptions of pupils' self-efficacy, social mobility and happiness. In data-rich systems like the UK, it is possible to use such measures to gauge school effectiveness in a utilitarian way. However, it is difficult to use these measures to extrapolate how far parents and pupils actually feel able to take advantage of educational opportunities for their own desired outcomes and well-being. Sen's capability approach was developed as a conceptual response to a similar set of problems, whereby simplistic measures of well-being – such as economic productivity – were being used as to gauge human development on a national and global scale. The study therefore adapts Sen's capability approach as an alternative framework for better understanding the relationship between schooling and well-being on Jersey.

Key ideas

As an opposed to narrow measures of societal outcomes, such as GDP or school exam results, Sen's approach focuses instead on the freedom of individuals to pursue choices that reflect their values and interests. The approach emphasises these 'capabilities' to pursue goals in life, whether in terms of individual freedoms (such as lifestyle choices) or fundamental life chances (such as having a job). The emphasis is therefore not just what people achieve, but on also whether they have the capability live their life in ways they regard as important. The theoretical framework used in this study extends this theoretical approach – and its related notions of choice, opportunity and well-being – to schooling, as defined in Table 1 below:

Table 1: The meaning of key terms from the capability approach, as applied to schooling

Capability	A student's *capability* represents the combination of outcomes which they achieve from their education, both over the shorter and longer term. Capabilities are difficult to measure, as they likely involve a wide range of ways in which a pupil might use their education – as well as the skills and experiences offered by their schooling – throughout their lives.
Choice	*Choice* is an essential precursor to capabilities, because people cannot achieve the outcomes they desire in life without knowing the full range of choices that are available to them. Choices in education may include the choice of which school to attend, which subjects to take (at secondary level), and a choice of extra-curricular activities on offer. This report considers choice in relation to the information available to pupils and parents regarding these and other aspects of schooling.
Opportunity	*Opportunity* relates to the ability to make decisions. It relates to how far pupils and parents are able to act on the choices they make, for instance, to achieve a place at their desired school, study their preferred range of subjects, or take advantage of the extra-curricular activities on offer. So, while *choice* relates to informing decision-making, *opportunity* relates to the ability to act on decisions. However, opportunity alone offers no guarantee of satisfaction or achievement.
Wellbeing	*Wellbeing* offers a subjective (i.e. personal) evaluation of the outcomes from the choices and opportunities available to pupils during their schooling. In other words, it relates to a student's assessment of their own capabilities, both now and in the future. However, because wellbeing is subjective by definition, it cannot easily be measured and instead it reflects individuals' own attitudes, opinions or perceptions.

This theoretical approach therefore considers the full range of options, decisions and outcomes which make up people's 'capabilities' and provides a framework for exploring these in terms of the values which people place on the decisions they make in life. When applied to education, this approach requires us to look beyond exam results or league tables and instead to consider the processes through which pupils make and pursue decisions regarding their schooling – to explore how they feel about these decisions – and to seek insights into how they experience or perceive the various outcomes which result from these.

An Overview of International Research on School Choice

To allow this report to be understood in the context of other research on choice in education, this section provides a brief overview of the findings from studies into school choice and policy from around the world. The ability for parents and pupils to choose (or state a preference for) the school they wish to attend is increasingly popular in developed countries.

However, there is no proof that such a choice has a benefit on pupils (Glenn & De Groof, 2002; Holmes et al., 2003). The political pressure for greater choice, coupled with the understandable desire of some parents to have greater freedom over their children's education, has contributed to the popularity of choice schooling, despite of concerns that it may lead to greater social segregation (Karsten, 1994; Whitty & Edwards, 1998; Goldhaber, 2000). These conflicting positions can only be reconciled only if we distinguish – as Sen's *capability approach* does – between the *existence* of choice and the ability to actually *exercise* to the benefit of pupils.

Opportunities to exercise choice

Academic theories of choice argue that parents act rationally when making decisions over schooling. In other words, they will make the best possible choices for their children's education. However, this assumes that parents have clear criteria in mind by which to make a choice, have full knowledge of the needs of their children, and have information on all the options available. For instance, in England there remains little clear evidence that parents make the most informed choices about schooling (Echols & Willms, 1995). Some also suggest that disadvantaged sections of society rarely have the right information at the right time to enable them to make the best choices (Willms & Echols, 1992; Wells, 1993; Gorard, 1997). Research has found that more advantaged families 'with knowledge of the system' and 'the ability to transport children to non-adjacent schools' are more likely to gain places at popular schools (Gorard et al., 2002: 368). However, parental demand for choice remains high amongst low-income families (Witte, 1999; Gill et al., 2001; Bulkley, 2005). Opponents of choice thus argue that, since social class and race largely determine access to and benefit from schooling (Gewirtz et al., 1995), greater choice may accentuate disadvantages in educational oppportunities along socio-economic or racial lines (Ball et al., 1996; Tomlinson, 1997; Goldhaber & Eide, 2002; Lynch & Moran, 2006).

School choice and attainment

There is some evidence – for example, from early projects like one in Alum Rock, California – that greater choice is linked to gains in student attainment (Kirkpatrick, 1990). However, overall the research evidence is inconclusive. For example, a relationship has been found between school choice and improvement in literacy and numeracy scores (Powers & Cookson, 1999), especially for African-American students (Gill et al., 2001), and pupils who require the greatest assistance (Jeynes, 2000). Reports from students *themselves* seem to be consistently positive, especially from students from disadvantaged backgrounds (Colopy & Tarr, 1994). However, some of the places held to be models of successful practice in this respect in the US, like Minnesota and Massachusetts, have low participation rates making it unsound to extrapolate too much from their experience (Nathan & Ysseldyke, 1994).

School choice, social class and risk

Research on the role of parents in school choice has found differences between socio-economic classes in terms of access to choice and how this access is exercised in decision-making (Vincent, 2001: 348; Poupeau et al, 2007). Knowledge about and attitude towards education are important factors in parental choice (Denessen et al., 2005). 'Professional' parents are typically unwilling to leave education solely to schools (Vincent & Martin, 2000; Vincent, 2001). They may also accept higher levels of risk in order to meet their aspirations (Hatcher, 1998). Of course, they also have access to greater social, economic and cultural resources with which to support their choices. Working-class parents, on the other hand, who are by definition resource-poor, may see home and school as separate entities. Whereas working-class students can often maintain their social position by merely completing compulsory schooling, professional families risk 'social demotion' by trying and failing, which makes middle-class families more favourable disposed towards school choice.

School choice and segregation

Middle-class parents typically seek niches in school systems that are likely to 'foster privileged access to better examination results' (Fitz, Taylor & Gorard, 2002: 127). However, research in the Netherlands suggests that support for school choice is not confined to the middle classes and is also strongly supported by immigrant working-class families (Denessen et al., 2005). Although there is some evidence of 'catchment area exodus' by middle-class parents (Noreisch, 2007: 84), research in England suggests that increased school choice does *not* result in the increased segregation of disadvantaged children in poorer-performing schools (Gorard et al. 2002; 2003). In fact, segregation may be decreased by encouraging people to choose schools other than on the basis of residency (Howell et al., 2002). Research also suggests that choice and voucher programs may moderate the effects of segregation where it already exists (Parsons et al., 2000; Bosetti, 2004). Once again, however, there are contradictory findings that suggest segregation can be exacerbated by choice (Tomlinson, 1997; Goldhaber & Eide, 2002; Stambach & Becker, 2006). In Detroit, for example, there is evidence that choice operates in such a way as to exclude economically deprived African-American students from popular schools (Lubienski, 2005). Similarly in Spain and Greece, middle-class pupils tend to congregate in popular (mostly private) schools, while less well-off children are 'trapped' in declining public schools (Bernal, 2005; Maloutas, 2007).

Data Collection

This section describes how data were collected for this report, through a combination of a questionnaire survey (administered online and in hard-copy) and in-depth interviews.

An overview of the research design

Three main methods of data collection were used. This allowed the researchers to gain a strong evidence base for this report, whereby findings could be corroborated through a process known as *triangulation* (the use of more than once source of evidence on the same research topics). The key features of the research design involved:

- The testing, or *piloting*, of all research instruments
- The use of focus groups and individual interviews as *qualitative* (non-numeric) research instruments
- The use of an online and hard-copy questionnaire as *quantitative* (numerically-based) research instruments
- A total of 41 days were spent conducting interviews on Jersey
- The participation of 14 schools in face-to-face components of the research (focus groups, interviews, and the hard-copy questionnaire)
  - 8 state primary schools, 1 private primary school, 3 state secondary schools and 2 private secondary schools
- The participation of 43 schools and 1 college in the online questionnaire
- The participation of governors and school/business leaders throughout the research

Characteristics of the research participants

Responses from primary schools

A total of 134 primary students completed the questionnaire. Just under two-thirds (60%) were female and three quarters (74%) were born in Jersey. 40% had at least one parent from Jersey, 36% had parents from the UK and 16% had parents from Portugal (see Figure 1). Students attended a range of primary schools (see Figure 2). 7% of pupils indicated that they had a learning difficulty and 15% considered English as their second language.

**Figure 1: Family origins of primary pupils**

**Figure 2: Primary pupils' schools**
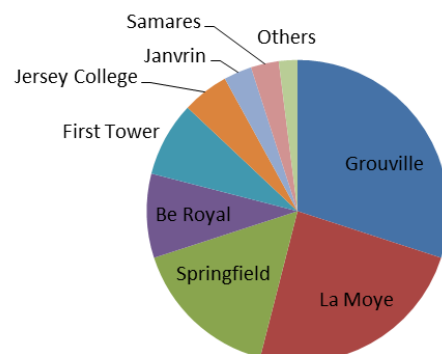
34 teachers from 17 different primary schools completed the questionnaire, 73% of whom were female, the majority (52%) were born in the UK and the remainder (48%) in Jersey. A total of 103 parents of primary pupils also responded, of which 88% were mothers. Most were born in the UK (39%) , Jersey (30%) or Portugal (17%), with the remainder from other countries (see Figure 3). 16% indicated that they had left school before the age of 16, 46% had GCSE or A levels, and 38% had at least a university-level qualification (see Figure 4). Almost three-quarters (72%) had all children born in Jersey and 18% stated that their children had learning difficulties such as English being a second language or writing problems.

Figure 3: Family origins of primary parents
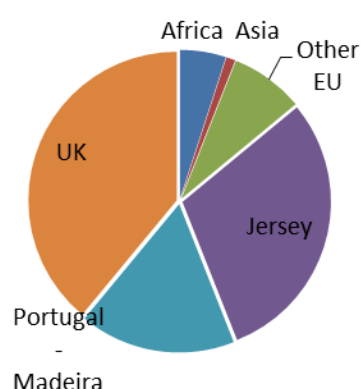
Figure 4: Education level of primary parents
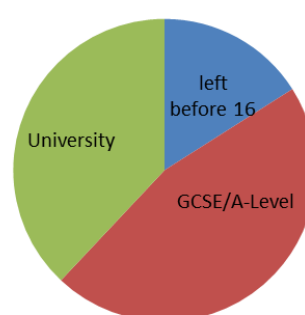
Responses from secondary schools

A total of 647 questionnaires were returned by secondary pupils, comprising an equal number of males (49. 5%) and females (50. 5%). Just over three-quarters (77%) were born in Jersey, although pupils' family origins included 36% from Jersey, 38% from the UK and 15% from Portugal (Figure 5). For 15% of students, English was a second language and a 10% of student respondents said that they had a learning difficultly. The majority of participants attended Le Rocquier (62%), Hautlieu (27%) and Grainville (9%) (see Figure 6).

Figure 5: Family origins of secondary pupils
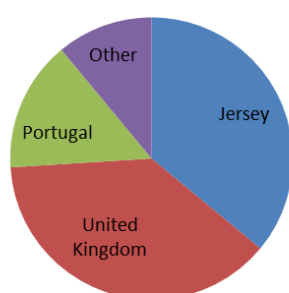
Figure 6: Secondary pupils' schools
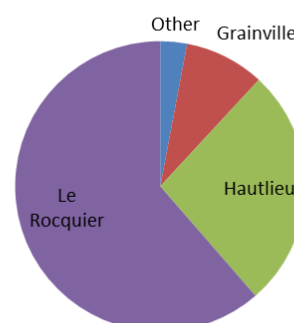
A total 41 secondary school teachers completed the questionnaire of which 22% were male and 78% were female. 21 were born in Jersey, 18 in the UK and two were from France. Together they taught a cross-section of subjects ranging from Mathematics and Science, Languages and Humanities, to Media and Business Studies. The majority of the teachers taught at Le Rocquier (34%) and Jersey College for Girls (32%), but also included staff from Beaulieu Convent School, De La Salle College, Hautlieu and Les Quennevais.

184 parents of secondary pupils replied to the questionnaire, 77% of whom were mothers. The majority of the respondents were born in either Jersey (36%) or the UK (39%) and a further 15% were from Portugal / Madeira. The remaining 10% came from Africa Asia or other EU countries. A fifth (22%) left school before 16 years of age, 45% had either GCSEs or A-levels, 34% had a university diploma or degree. Almost three-quarters (73%) said that their children were born in Jersey, and 10% stated that their child(ren) had learning difficulties.

CHAPTER 2: CHOICE

Key Findings

- The catchment area system for non-fee paying primary and secondary schools does work to constrain choice in practice, although people generally accepted this system as fair.

- Written information was widely distributed by prospective catchment area schools (as well, but to a lesser extent, from non-catchment schools) at both primary and secondary level, which does suggest that – regardless of the catchment system – schools communicate effectively with prospective pupils and their parents.

- Open days and other opportunities to visit schools in person were used by the vast majority of pupils and parents and our results suggest that these sources of information were amongst the most popular and valuable.

- Despite the widespread distribution of 'formal' written information and the popularity of open days, word-of-mouth appears to be extremely important for Jersey residents when making choices about education.

- Information from the government and official information available on the internet were both perceived to be inadequate by some parents, who wanted more transparency regarding school performance.

- The importance of word-of-mouth and face-to-face school visits do pose issues for recent or prospective migrants who, for whatever reason, may not have access to these sources of information – this could be exacerbated by the perceived inadequacies of the information available online and from the government.

Introduction

This chapter investigates the information available on schools in Jersey, which might help inform pupils' and parents' choices regarding primary and secondary education. Choice is a crucial element of individual freedom and can be seen as a precursor to personal, social, and economic opportunities and well-being. The capability approach, upon which this research is based, argues that people's freedom to make choices in their lives is the first step towards achieving the positive outcomes that they desire, both as individuals and as a society. This may sound simple. However, making the 'right' choices for the circumstances in which they are in requires that they have access to information that is relevant, accurate, and of high quality. In short, we cannot make the best choices in life unless we have sufficient information on the options available to us.

This chapter explores school choice, with a particularly focus on information. The first section of the chapter looks at primary schooling in Jersey and the second section looks at secondary schooling. Both sections use a combination of responses to our questionnaire survey and interviews with pupils, parents, teachers, and other stakeholders, to get a picture of the information which is available to families when making choices about which schools children will attend, which subjects they choose to study, and what extra-curricular activities they may wish to pursue. The survey provides a valuable source of information on the types of information received, where this information comes from, and how useful it is felt to be. Talking to people in Jersey then gives addition insights into how information circulates through both formal channels (i.e. schools) and informal channels (i.e. word of mouth).

Primary Schooling

In the public primary school system there the opportunity families have to select a school are limited by catchment area.

> *Within the Jersey Education Law, parents do not have the right to send their children to any school of their choice. They can, however, state their preference. [Policy-maker]*

> *The children who come to this school tend to be resident in the area. I think the catchment area was brought in with the idea of having a fair system, so I think parents see that is not treating one school against another. I think it works because it's a small island and it's a pragmatic solution. [Public primary school headteacher]*

> *The majority of children entering secondary education don't get a choice. The secondary school they enter depends on catchment. [School governor]*

There is also a generational element to the catchment system as this headmaster in a public primary explained:

> *For local people who live in this area, they went to this school so their children come to this school, so it's a generational thing. Most people will go to their local catchment school for convenience. We still have some children here who lived in this area when the child was 4, the child is now 8 and the parents have moved out of the area and they still come every day because their child is settled here. [Public primary school headteacher]*

The nature of the information received – and its ability to effectively inform families' school choices – nevertheless constituted a crucial measure of parents' and pupils' capability to make informed school choices. Moreover, even when catchment areas, older siblings, or other factors work to narrow pupil's and parent's choices, access to high quality information remains of great value in helping to prepare children to start their primary education.

Types and sources of information

Pupils, parents and teachers were asked about the main sources of information for choosing a primary school in Jersey (see Figure 7). The main form of written information received by pupils about prospective school and education generally came in leaflet format (62%) and letters (75%) from local catchment schools, while 47% also received 'information packs' (see Figure 7.1). A lower proportion came from non-catchment local schools. Parents also reported receiving written material from catchment schools and to a lesser extent from non-catchment schools (see Figure 7.2). Primary staff felt that prospective students were most likely to receive information from schools (see Figure 7.3) although they also believed that pupils and parents used information from government offices (21%) and websites (39%).


The sources of information on which school choices were made varied. Primary school pupils reported that the majority of information came from their parents (60%), with teachers (21%) and siblings (13%) also contributing information (see Figure 8.1). Pupils reported obtaining information about after-school activities came from parents (37%), primary school teachers (35%) and friends (9%). Furthermore, more than three-quarters of pupils (78%) visited prospective schools on Open Days or on other occasions (59%) Parents appeared to rely more heavily on primary school teachers (36%), secondary schools (11%) and neighbours and friends (17%) for information (see Figure 8.2). Parents' information about after-school activities came mainly from primary schools themselves (53%). Primary school teachers perceived that schools constituted the greatest source of information, both in terms of materials on school choice (41%) and information on after-school activities (85%) (see Figure 8.3). Compared to the high proportion of pupils who reported attending open days (78%), less than a third of primary teachers (30%) believed that students attended Open Days or visited on other occasions (27%).

Figure 7: Type and origin of information on primary schools
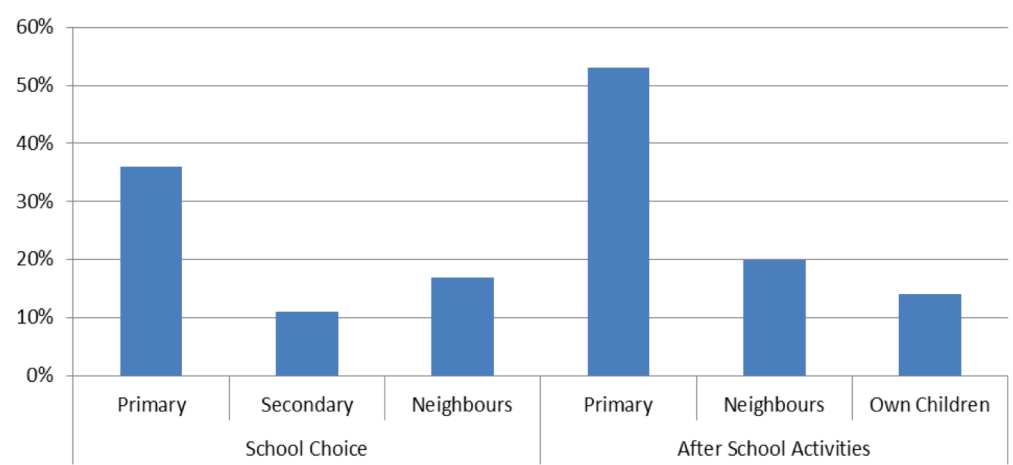
7.1:Reported by **pupils**

7.2: Reported by **parents**

7.3: Reported by **teachers**
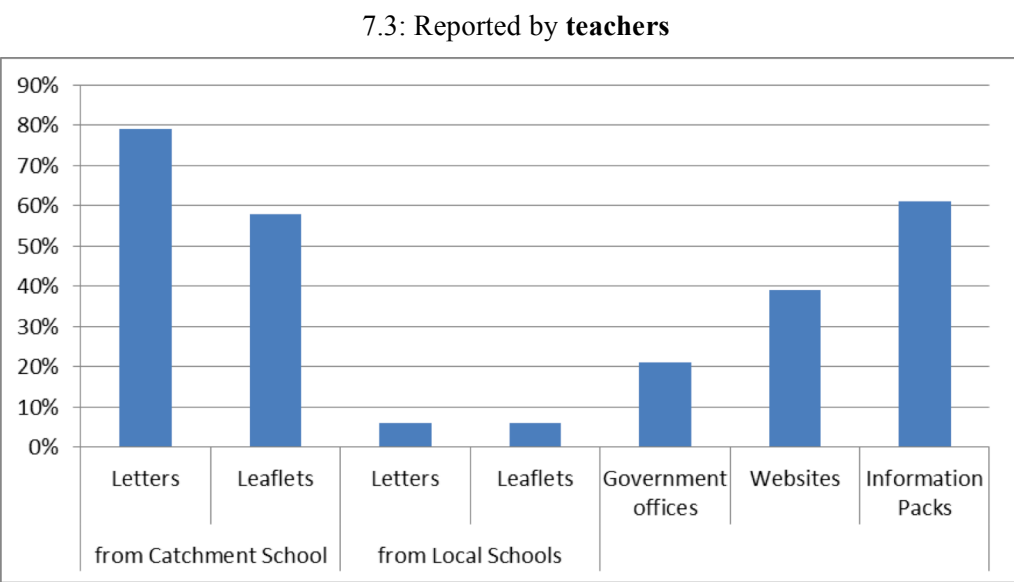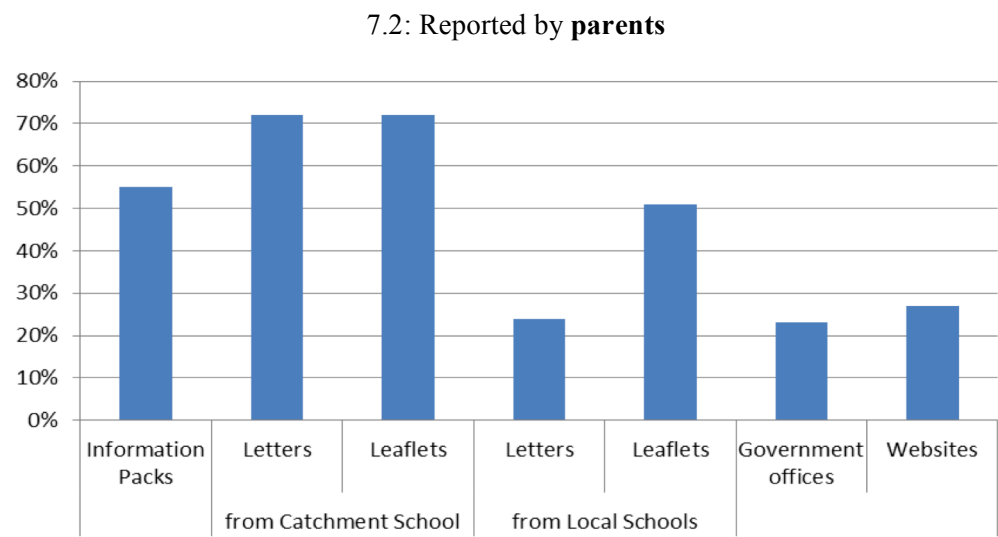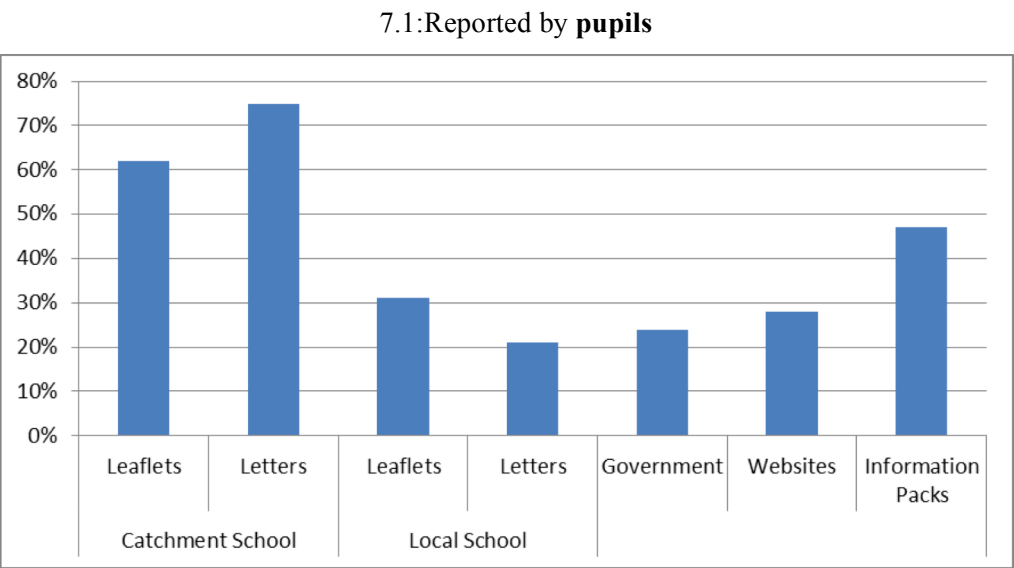
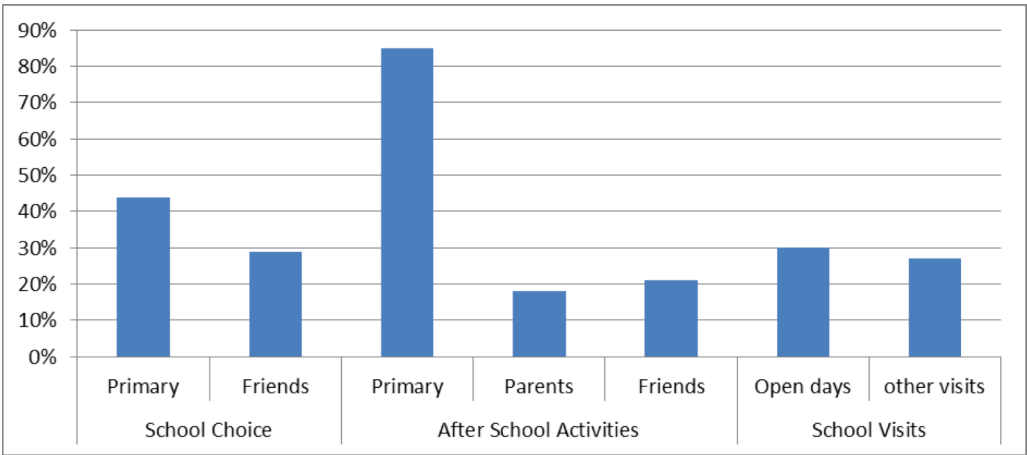**Figure 8: Source of information on primary schools**

8.1: Reported by **pupils**
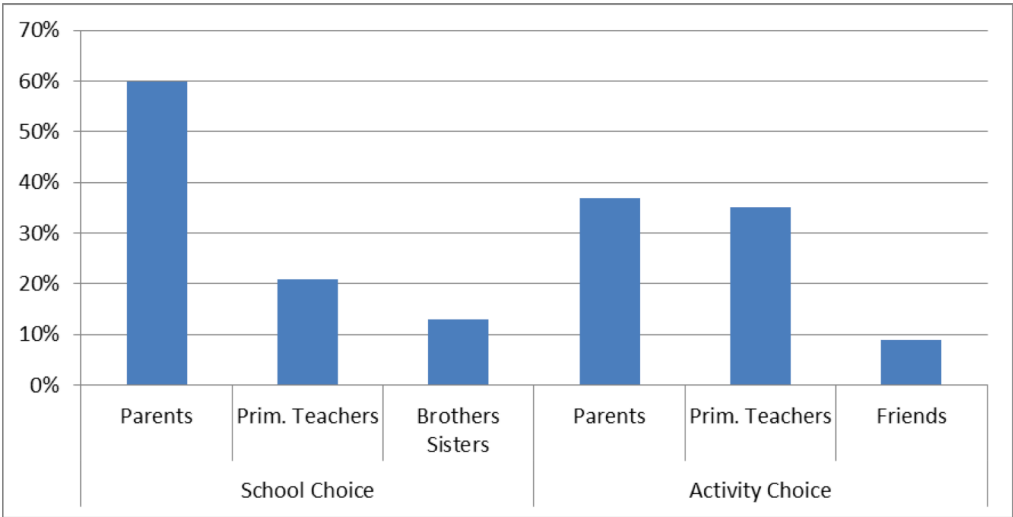
8.2: Reported by **parents**

8.3: Reported by **teachers**

Formal sources of information

Further insights into the information available to primary school pupils came from interview discussions with parents, pupils, and education professionals. Public primary schools provide children in Year 6 with information about prospective secondary schools, as one pupil describes:

> *This school gave us information about all the schools available and I [then] decided with my parents. [Year 6 girl]*

Most of the pupils in primary schools discussed getting information about schools from their parents:

> *I didn't get a lot of information; I think it was mostly my parents. [Year 6 boy]*

> *My mum asked me and she gave me all the information. [Year 6 boy]*

> *My dad told me about the school and I visited it. [Year 6 girl]*

When seeking information on school choices, parents or families tend to contact and visit the schools they are interested in, as this headteacher from a public primary school explained:

> *Parents would also come to the front door and talk to staff. I think it's more a parental choice. I don't think children have a lot of information.*

The various advertisements in the local press also constituted another source of information when choosing a secondary school. As a girl in Year 6, whose family came from England, explained:

> *I don't have any relatives over here, so I listened to teachers; and I found in the newspapers that 100% of students pass their A-Levels in [secondary school].*

Interviewees therefore attested to a range of 'formal' sources of information on school choice. This form of information generally originated from the Education Department and was primarily disseminated via schools and other channels (with some information given directly to pupils, but most coming via parents).

Jersey schools were also distributed formal information regarding extra-curricular activities, as these state primary school pupils explained:

> *For netball, I got information from my teachers and for Portuguese lessons it was from the headteacher here.*

> *For netball, when I came here the team needed a goal keeper and I got most of my info about netball here and my coach here does the island team as well.*

This suggests that schools were reported to be proactive in encouraging extra-curricular and after-school activities and our research gave no indication that parents were dissatisfied with these sources of information.

Informal sources of information

Imperfect though they are, in England league tables constitute an important source of information. As there are no league tables published in Jersey, word of mouth and social networks constitute a major source of informal information that is not produced by schools themselves.

> *On the whole, parents would [rely on] outside school recommendations and community. The island is a small community so people get the information. [Primary school headteacher]*

> *I think parents consider where their neighbours' children or other family members' children go. Because Jersey is small you can have very good 'word of mouth' and you can also get genuine information from children who are there rather than counting on the prospectus. [Local business person]*

Interestingly, while some interviewees implied that it was Jersey's 'small island' sense of sociability which helped circulate informal information about schools – immigrant families felt equally able to rely on word of mouth, albeit from within their own social networks:

> *With our Portuguese families, if they find a particular school that works well, they talk to each other within their community and they start to join together to follow through to that school, and then they have to decide what's best for their child. [Primary school headteacher]*

> *I got my information from my mum's friend. [Year 6 pupil]*

In the absence of league tables or other equivalent sources of information (not originating from schools or the education system), parents and pupils therefore appear to rely on word of mouth. It appears that this word of mouth operates through communities and social networks. However, this does raise worrying questions as to whether all of Jersey's residents have equal access to this information. While the interviews suggest the immigrant communities also share information about schools, such information may not be available to everyone (for instance, new migrants who have yet to make social ties in Jersey).

It was also suggested that informal information was regularly circulated about after school activities, as these pupils in Year 6 revealed:

> *Some friends go to that football club, so I joined.*

> *My friends told me about the training and I really like football so I joined the team.*

I used to do Cubs when I was 8 so I got information from [a friend]

An important 'draw' for pupils' participation in extra-curricular activities therefore comes from invitations from school friends or peers. Again, while it is perfectly understandable (and desirable) that children may share information about the activities in which they are involved, this does raise questions about whether and how such information circulates amongst those who do not have equal or established access to peer groups (again, such as children who have recently arrived in Jersey, or pupils who have less extensive friendship groups for any reason).

Quality of Information

Pupils who responded to our questionnaire reported that the clarity of the information they received was very good (both regarding choices of schools and regarding after school activities)[1]. Pupils also indicated that the found school visits and open days to be very helpful[2]. The vast majority (94%) of parents had attended an open day and most reported these visits to be very helpful (as shown in Figure 9)[3]. The majority of parents also assessed that the information they had received concerning school choice[4] and after-school activities[5] was 'clear' (see Figure 9).

Figure 9: Quality of Information Reported by Parents

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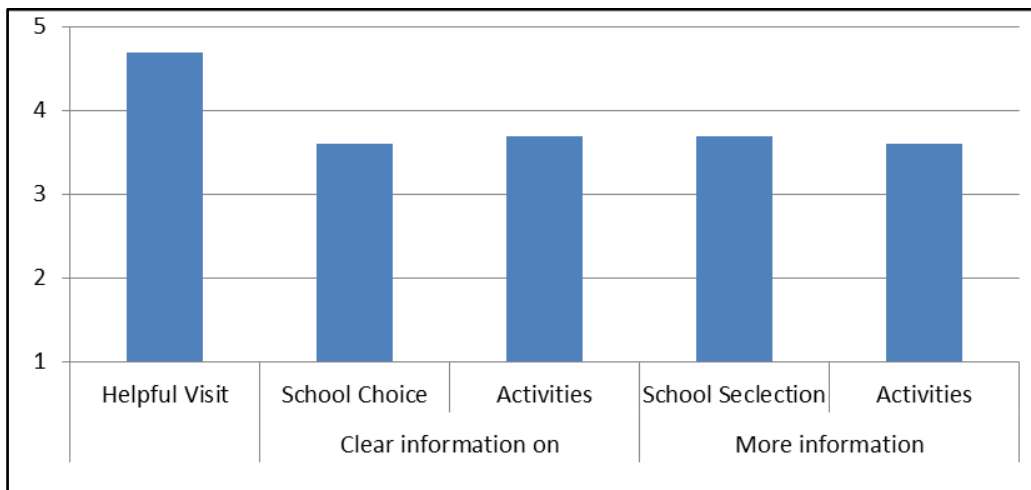
[1] x = 3.9, SD = 1.2

[2] x = 4.5, SD = 0.8

[3] x = 4.7, SD = 0.7

[4] x = 3.6, SD = 1.5

[5] x = 3.7, SD = 1.3

Primary teachers also generally felt that school visits were very helpful pupils[6] (see Figure 10). However, Figure 10 illustrates how, while teachers believed that the information regarding after-school activities was clear[7], they felt that the material on school choice needed significant improvement[8].

Figure 10: Quality of Information Reported by Teachers
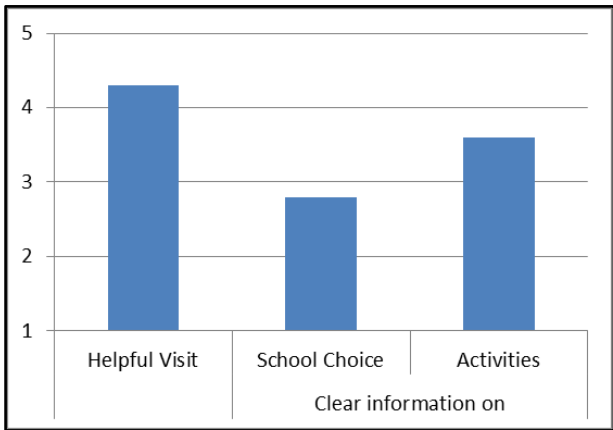
Interviewees provided some additional insight into the quality of the information which families received or accessed. The internet constituted one additional routes for accessing information, which some participants felt to be of good quality:

> *The State publishes a whole range of choice if you log on to the website. There are good websites that give you whatever information [you want] [Parent of Year 6 pupil]*

> *There is a 'Mums in Jersey' Facebook page that supports other mums. So if you have a question you can always ask them, [thought it] doesn't mean that the answers they give are always the right ones! [Mother of Year 6 pupil]*

However, other suggested that the information provided online was not easily accessible:

> *It needs to be more accessible on the Internet and more info given out, like contact persons, etc. The people who are local and have been here know the info, but for people who are coming in, we don't have any knowledge or friends or family here. It is a limbo. [Immigrant (from outside the UK) mother of a Year 6 pupil]*

> *For people who haven't lived here long, it is very difficult to find information [online] - that's what friends from abroad told me. [Local business person]*

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[6] x = 4.3, SD = 0.8

[7] x = 3.6, SD = 0.9

[8] x = 2.8, SD = 1.0

Given the potential for the internet to provide a rich and universally-accessible source of information (both formal and informal), it is worrying that our survey results suggest the internet did not constitute a good of source of information. As the interviewees quoted above infer, the lack of information available online risks being a particular disadvantage for families who are new to Jersey and who might be most likely to turn to the internet for insights into school choices.

Secondary Schooling

As with the selection of primary school, the transition to state secondary schools tends to be driven by the catchment area system. The system must also deal with falling numbers or overcrowding in particular schools, so if a catchment school becomes full, then an alternative will be allocated. Pupils transfer from primary to secondary schools at the end of year 6 (usually when aged 11). The allocation on places to non-fee paying secondary schools is done by the Education Department depending on whether families live or work in a catchment area, or whether they attend a primary school in a catchment area. Primary schools generally 'feed' into particular catchment secondary schools as a result. However, school choice is not entirely fixed by the catchment system. The allocation of secondary school places may also depend on special education needs (SEN), having older siblings in particular schools, or requests by pupils/parents based on 'good educational reason for attending a non-catchment school'. Fee paying and private secondary school choices are not based on catchment area and are instead handled by schools directly.

The fact that choice over which secondary school to attend are constrained by the catchment system does not negate the importance of information for pupils and families. Information can help prepare pupils for the transition between primary and secondary education. Equally, this section also focuses on information regarding subject/curriculum choices within secondary education, as well as information about extra-curricular activities. The ways in which information, understanding, and knowledge about schooling circulates therefore remains a topic of considerable importance for families and young people in Jersey.

Types and sources of information

Pupils, parents, and teachers were each asked about the types of information available when choosing a secondary school in Jersey and where that information originated from (see Figure 13). The pupils surveyed for the research received a substantial amount of information when they were considering their choice of secondary school (see Figure 13.1). Pupils generally received materials from their local catchment secondary schools, in the form of information packs (73%), letters (73%), and leaflets (70%). A far smaller proportion of pupils also received materials from non-catchment schools, in the form of leaflets (28%) and letters

(21%) from other secondary schools. In addition, some students also received information from government offices (27%) or accessed it via the internet (32%).

Parents also reported that the majority of information on secondary schools came in the form of information packs (65%), letters (65%), and leaflets (66%) from the local catchment school (see Figure 13.2). Information was less commonly received from non-catchment secondary schools. Interestingly, however, a slightly higher proportion of parents reported receiving a leaflet from non-catchment schools than the pupils we surveyed, which may suggest that some information is by-passing pupils and being targeted at parents instead. Less than a quarter of parents obtained information from government offices (22%) and websites (25%). However, over three-quarters (76%) attend an open days at secondary schools and a 40% said that they visited on other occasions to help inform their children's choices

The teachers who responded to the survey indicated that information was distributed in a similar way to the experiences of pupils and parents (see Figure 13.3). Teachers reported that most of the information took the form of leaflets (54%) and letters (64%) sent from the local catchment schools, with a far lower proportion of leaflets (29%) and letters (29%) also sent from non-catchment schools. Approximately one-third (32%) believed that students received information from government offices and 42% thought that students used websites for information. Teachers therefore appeared to over-estimate the actual use of the internet, in particular, as a source of information on secondary school choices.

Figure 1: Type and origin of information on secondary schools

1.1: Reported by **pupils**
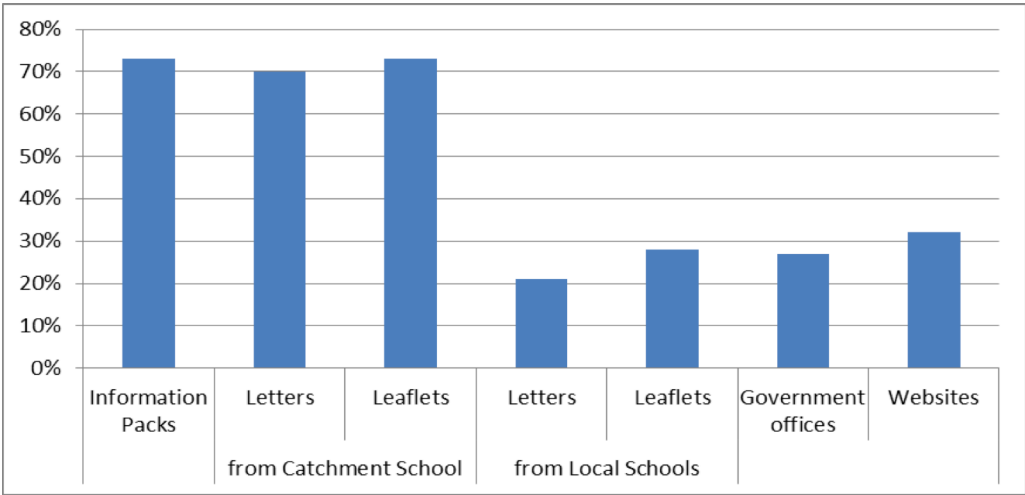
1.2: Reported by **parents**
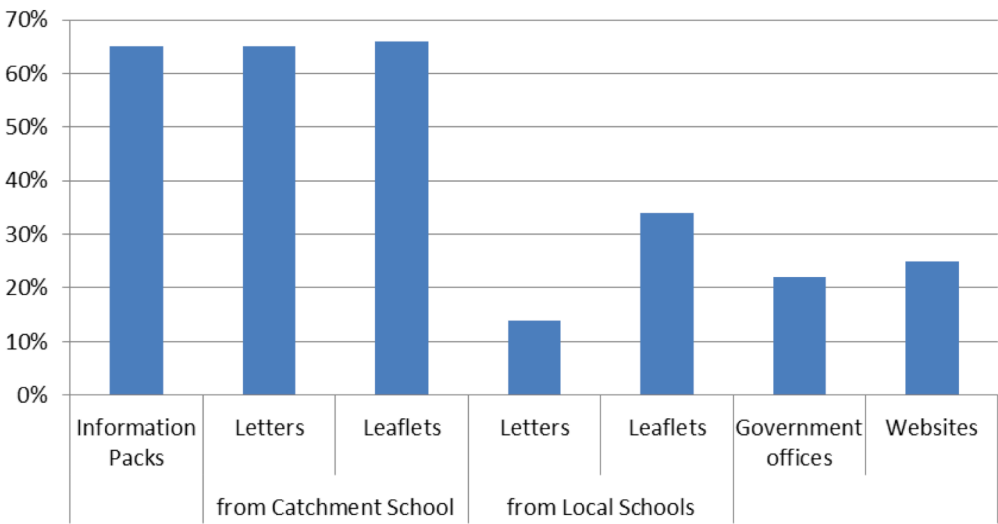
1.3: Reported by **teachers**
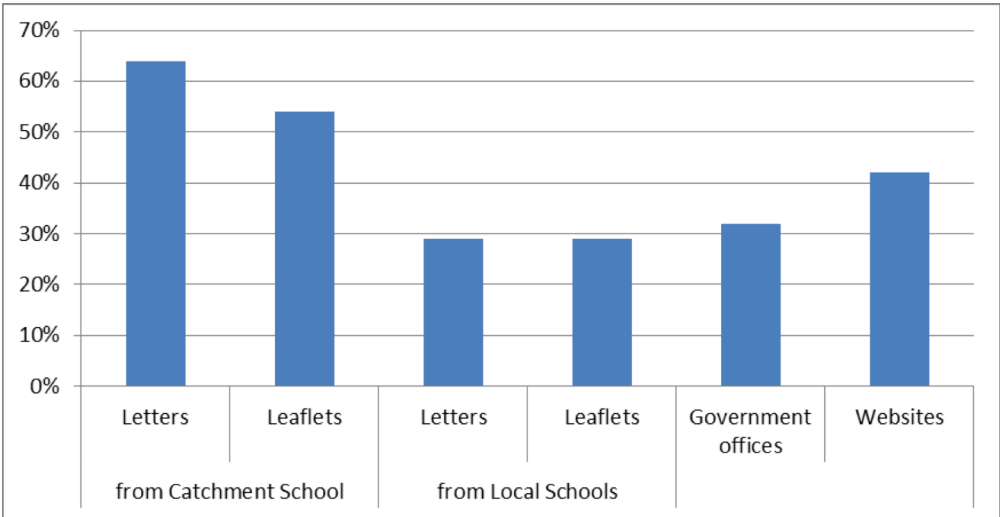
Pupils and pupils were asked about the most important sources of information they were most likely to turn to when choosing a secondary school (see Figure 12). Pupils reported that their primary schools (49%) were the main source of information regarding secondary schools (see Figure 12.1). A lower proportion of information came from pupil's parents (25%). Perhaps most interestingly, less than one-in-five pupils (16%) listed secondary schools themselves as the main sources of information on school choice. In contrast, pupils reported that the vast majority of information on subject choices (73%) and after-school activities (73%) did come directly from local secondary schools. In addition, almost three-quarters of students (74%) attended Open Days at local schools and over 40% visited schools on other occasions to help inform their choice. This suggests that, while pupils attended open days and received information from secondary schools, they still considered their primary school as the most important source of information.

The main sources of information on secondary school choices reported by parents took a broadly similar pattern to that reported by pupils (see Figure 12.2). Primary schools were the most important source of information (45%). A slightly higher proportion of parents reported that secondary schools were also an important source of information (??%), when compared to the pupils themselves (16%). The main source of information for subject choice was reported to be local secondary schools (58%), as was the main source of information on after-school activities (43%). It should also be noted that a number of parents (36%) said that their children constituted the main source of information on choices regarding extra-curricular activities (36%).

Over three-quarters of teachers (78%) thought that parents were likely to visit secondary schools enough on open days, and more than half felt that parents were also likely to visit on other occasions (56%).

Figure 12: Source of information on secondary schools

42.1: Reported by **pupils**
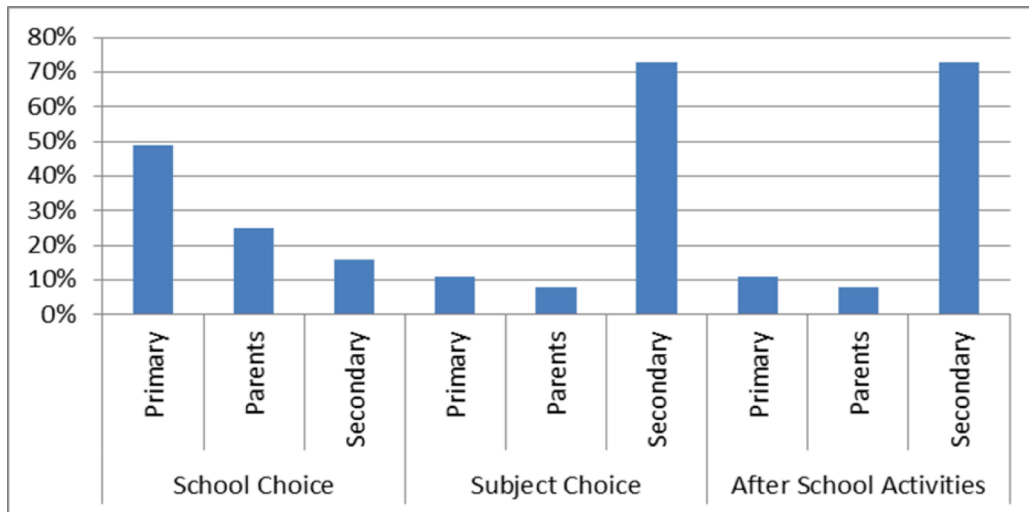
42.2: Reported by **parents**
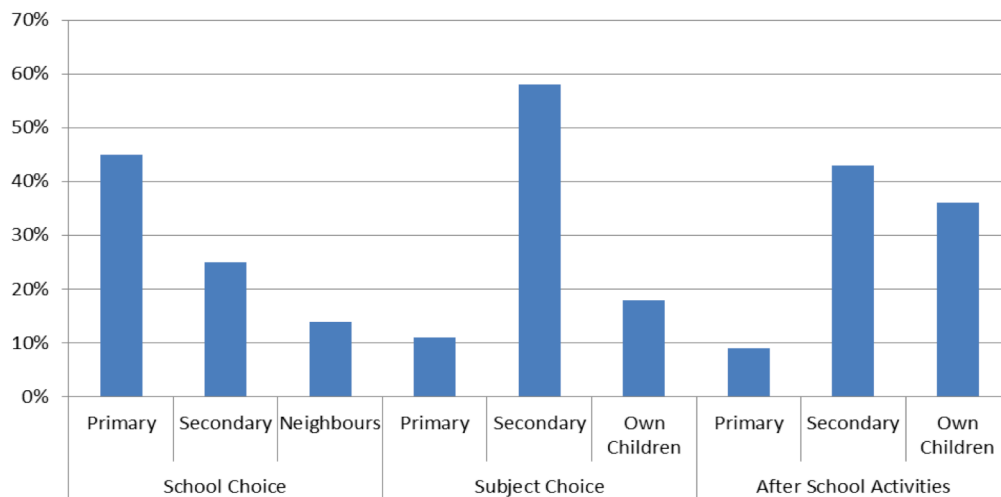
Formal sources of information

Interviews with pupils, parents, teachers, and other stakeholders provide a further source of insight into how information was accessed and utilised in the process of making secondary school choices in Jersey.

Our interviews suggested that formal sources of information were important for pupils and parents. Interestingly, this included information from the Education Department and from online resources, which contrasted with the survey results (in which only small proportion of respondents reported accessing information from these sources):

They can go to the Education Department; it's probably the first point of contact for parents when they are choosing a school. [Secondary school headteacher]

They can go to our website; we'd like to think that there is plenty of information there to guide parents. [Private secondary school headteacher]

For secondary schools, a lot is advertised on websites and you can contact the Education Department. [Business person]

Some of the teachers and stakeholders interviewed therefore appeared to overestimate the importance of the government and internet-based resources as formal sources of information. In contrast, some of the parents interviewed were critical regarding the lack of formal information regarding available on the internet, especially regarding school rankings and exam results. As two business women and mothers of school-age children told us:

If you search you will find it very difficult to find any results on the website, so you have to give them a call and they don't give you the results easily. The schools' websites [are] very poor quality. The Education Department should take more of an interest in the type of information that is available.

I think that every school should have a report on its website so that parents could read it. For a parent I think it's important to understand how a school has been graded. I found it completely frustrating that parents couldn't find information on how their children were measured.

Several secondary school teachers and stakeholders also agreed:

Parents should be informed on schools' value added scores and given a choice as to which school their child attends.

The 'States' could be better at providing information to all families with children in Years 5 and 6 regarding all secondary schools. [School governor]

There appears to be an expectation that the internet should provide an important source of formal and objective information on secondary school choices, with some interview respondents feeling that Jersey's education system was falling short in this respect.

As the survey responses suggested, schools themselves constituted an important source of information for parents and pupils seeking to choose a secondary school. Secondary schools generally hold open evenings in the autumn where they give information to prospective parents. Many primary schools also hold an 'end-of-Year 6' meeting around the same time, to explain the secondary system to parents and make sure they are informed about the transition. One public primary headteacher explained the aim of these events:

We hope that parents feel in control when transferring to secondary school; that they know when [and] what is going to happen.

Interviews suggested that secondary schools tend to have an 'open-door' policy when it comes to families approaching them for information, as the following participants explained:

> *They can of course ring the school and make an appointment to look around the school and I show around to all our prospective parents and pupils; they can come to my office if they like to ask questions. [State secondary school headteacher]*

> *I got a letter saying I was coming to Grainville school and before we came to school we also had a talk with Head of Year 7. [Immigrant Year 7 student]*

The interviews also suggested that school visits were perceived positively by pupils and parents alike and were generally discussed in terms of receiving high-quality information:

> *After [seeing] the reports that this school had, and the parent evenings that we attended, I didn't want to look anywhere else. I was quite happy with the standard of education; what they want to do with the students; how they are pushed forward. [Mother of a Year 7 student in state secondary school]*

> *I thought I was fully informed. It was really good. Everything I heard about was really good. [Year 9 girl in state secondary school]*

Another important source of information is the 'feeder' primary schools (for both state and private options):

> *Some of us stayed in the prep school down the road and automatically transferred from the prep school down to the college; and they kind of persuade you to go from the prep to the college. [Year 9 student in private secondary school]*

Schools themselves therefore appear to offer a valuable source of information in the eyes of pupils and parents.

The survey responses (Figure 12) also suggested that information from schools was important for pupil's curriculum and extra-curricular choices. We explored this in our interviews. The majority of students reported that their school was the most important source of information on subject choices and teachers described how this information was provided:

> *What we have been able to do reasonably well is to inform parents via our parents' evenings, and in those evenings we are beginning to have a half an hour seminar where a senior member of staff can talk to parents about the National Curriculum Levels and about curriculum options. [Private secondary school headteacher]*

> *We have a comprehensive options programme. We have an information evening about vocational events. We have an open evening which has all the options that are on offer and students and parents receive the information and tutors help students to make the right decisions. [Secondary school teacher]*

Parents were generally positive when discussing the efforts taken by schools to inform them and their children of subject choices:

> *We had a meeting here and they gave us lots of information about their options and choices, which was brilliant; very informative. And my daughter had her own ideas and we went with what she wanted to do. I want her to be happy and do the subjects she does well, and the guidance here was very good. [Mother of Year 9 student]*

In contrast, some parents had negative experiences of attempting to access information on subject choices from their children's secondary schools:

> *I haven't met the teachers yet and even when you do meet them it's like five minutes and all the parents jump in, so it's a horrible experience. [Mother of a Year 9 student]*

Overall, it appears that the quality and provision of open evening and other opportunities to access subject information directly from schools is of considerable importance within the Jersey system.

For pupils, the information received from schools was used to help inform their curriculum choices, alongside discussions with their teachers (or prospective teachers):

> *We got the booklet, but I also checked with the subject teachers to see if they recommended me taking subjects as well … which helped [Year 9 student in private secondary school]*

> *When we were given the booklet we got a lot of information about every subject in detail and then we asked our teachers if they thought we'd be good candidates [Year 9 student]*

The opportunity to receive 'formal' information via booklets or other resources, and then to discuss these options with teachers, appeared as a particular strength in terms of the way in which curriculum information was disseminated within the education system.

Informal sources of information

Unsurprisingly, our interviews suggested that 'word of mouth' constituted an important source of 'informal' information on school choices. It was even suggested that informal exchanges of information regarding secondary school options are strongly embedded in the culture of Jersey:

> *In an island like Jersey there is word of mouth so an awful lot of information is passed from parent to parent. [Private secondary school headteacher]*

In practice, this often involved the exchange of information amongst neighbours (as also suggested by the survey results from parents, as shown in Figure 12). Similarly, information was also exchanged within families:

> *I wanted [state secondary school named] because one of my sister's children came here and she felt it was fantastic; and Jersey being quite small and good reports about [state secondary school named] and that they had a SEN programme. [Mother of a Year 11 student in state secondary school]*

The interviews also suggested that word of mouth was particularly important for migrant families who may be seeking information on secondary school choices from those with greater knowledge of Jersey's schools:

> *I think parents would listen to the opinion of relatives who have been here for longer; maybe from their bosses as well. A lot of the parents who arrive are new here. They don't know much about the schools so they get a lot of input from others. [State secondary school teaching assistant]*

Information therefore appears to circulate via informal sources and existing social networks – and these are likely to operate in parallel and in addition to formal sources of information. One might also suggest that the importance of word of mouth is especially significant given the lack of league tables and the perceived poor quality of the information available online (as discussed above), although the research does not provide concrete evidence to corroborate this.

Lastly, it should also be noted that family 'traditions' invariably operate to inform and guide school choices at secondary level. This appeared to be particularly evident in the case of private schooling, where families feel strongly about continuing 'family traditions' of association with particular schools. However, this was also discussed in reference to certain state schools:

> *My mum, dad and sister came to this school and I've heard it's quite good so I came as well. [Boy in state secondary year 9]*

At a more practical level, having older children already attending particular secondary schools also appeared to guide parent's choices (perhaps more than those of pupils themselves):

> *She didn't have a choice because her older brother and sister [went there] so I already knew what the school was about. I knew the school well and I knew it was good for her. [Mother of a Year 7 student in state secondary school]*

> *I got an offer to go to Haute Vallée because my primary school was next to it, but I came here because my sister's here. [Girl in Year 9 of a state secondary school]*

Overall, therefore, information is sought and obtained by families from a wide variety of sources, with some (such as open days) being perceived more positively than others (such as online resources). Moreover, word of mouth and family connections also work to guide the choices made by parents and children regarding transitions into secondary education.

Quality of Information

Responses to the survey also provide an assessment of the perceived quality of information received by pupils and parents with regards to secondary school choices, curriculum choices, and extra-curricular activities. Pupils generally reported a moderately high level of satisfaction with the information received from secondary schools. The majority of pupils found that the information on school choice, subject choice and activates was clear (see Figure 13). Equally, most answers also suggested that open days or school visits were helpful. Fewer pupils strongly agreed that more information was required from schools on the topics of school selection, subject choice and available activities, although responses suggest that more information would be welcomed (see Figure 13).

Figure 13: Quality of information on secondary school, reported by pupils
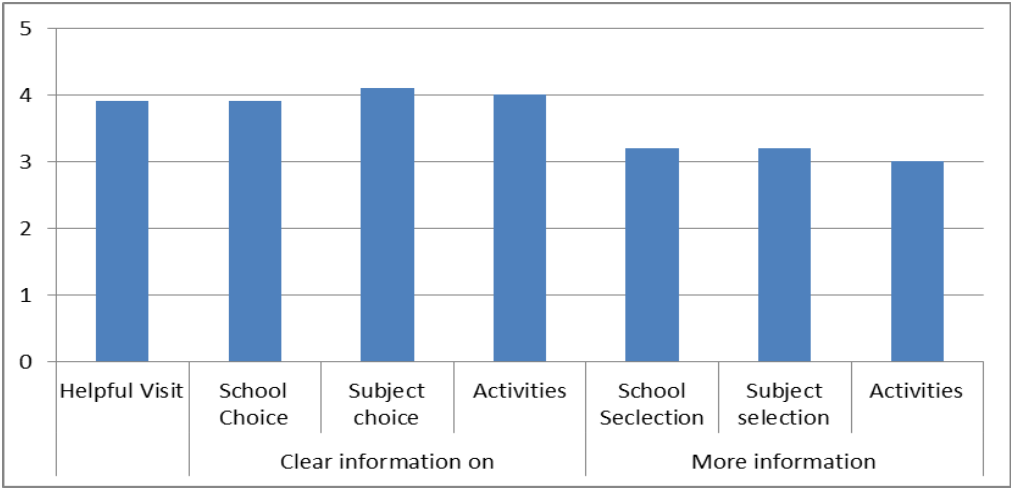
Parents generally provided similar responses to pupils when asked about the quality of information received from secondary schools (see Figure 14). Parents agreed that the information on school choice, subject choice and activities was clear. There was general agreement that more information would be desirable, although parents did not appear to feel particularly strongly in this regard. More interestingly, perhaps, parents strongly agreed that school visits and open days were helpful. While the difference is not great, this result does appear to suggest that parents find school visits more helpful than pupils (compare Figures 13 and 14).

Figure 14: Quality of information on secondary school, reported by parents
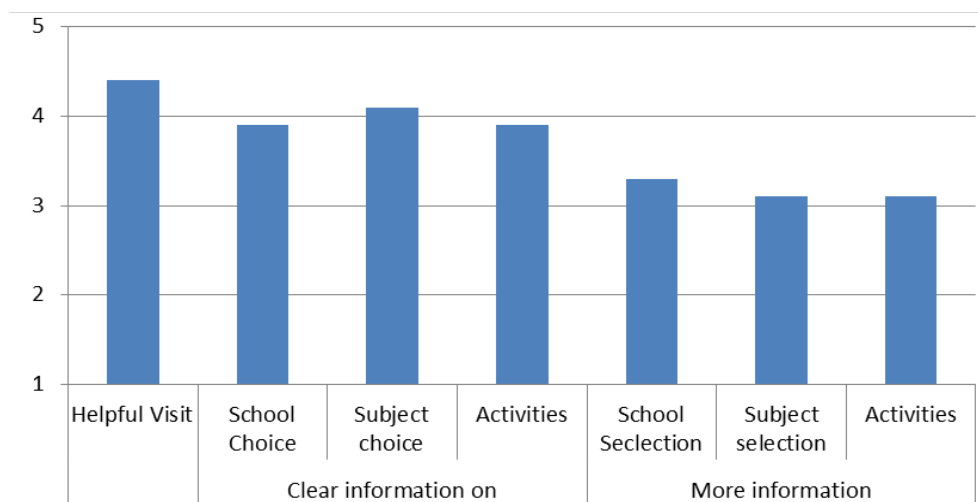
Conclusion: Informing choice in education

Choice is constrained by the catchment area system for non-fee paying primary and secondary schools in Jersey. This largely appears to be accepted as a 'given' within the education system and the research gave the impression that it was seen as a relatively fair and equitable way of allocating school places. However, this is not to say that access to information when making school choices within these constraints was not important. This is perhaps best illustrated by the fact that the research found that 'formal' information about schools was widely distributed to pupils and parents, with the vast majority of respondents having received some form of written information about their prospective catchment area schools (as well, but to a lesser extent, from non-catchment schools) at both primary and secondary level. This information was felt to be clear and of generally good quality and was valued by pupils and parents alike. One can therefore conclude that schools are not complacent when it comes to communicating about the choices they offer.

Open days and other opportunities to visit schools in person appear to be particularly important for families and young people in Jersey. The vast majority of respondents to our survey had taken the opportunity to visit schools as a way of gaining information prior to beginning primary or secondary schooling. The information received from such visits was almost overwhelmingly perceived to be helpful. Again, this suggests that schools are doing well to provide prospective pupils and parents with insights and information. Other 'informal' means of gaining access to information through face-to-face contact – whether with teachers, relatives, or other members of the community – were also perceived to be important. It appears that a considerable amount of information regarding education in Jersey circulates through word-of-mouth, especially when it comes to questions of school's performance or effectiveness. This is a feature of the culture of Jersey. However, the importance of word-of-

mouth must be understood in context of the perceived inadequacies in the information available online and from other 'formal' sources (such as the Education Department). This raises questions as to how people might access objective information on school's performance without having access to word-of-mouth. For instance, new or prospective migrants may not have social networks through which to access such information.

Lastly, it was clear from our research that information was also sought and obtained with regards to curriculum choices and opportunities for extra-curricular activities. This information could be seen as particularly important in light of the fact that school choices take places within the catchment system. The availability of information regarding subject choices therefore constitutes an important 'capability' – in a theoretical sense – from which pupils and their families can exercise additional choice over education. Information regarding subjects and activities appeared to be especially important for secondary education. On the whole, it appeared that schools were effective in distributing information via 'formal' channels (such as through written materials). However, more could perhaps be done to facilitate face-to-face communication and dialogue regarding secondary subject choices. While most parents felt that open evenings and other school events were adequate in this regard, and most pupils appeared to have opportunities to discuss these choices with their teachers, some respondents did indicate that open evenings did not provide sufficient time to discuss subject choices.

Overall, information and communication were perceived to be a hugely valuable and important aspect of the school system in Jersey. Despite of the constraints imposed by the catchment system, schools should therefore be encouraged to continue and enhance their efforts in this regard. In particular, the internet appeared to be a domain in which schools and, in particular, the States' government, had a considerable way to go to meet the expectations of Jersey's families.

CHAPTER 3: OPPORTUNITY

Key Findings

- The pupils and parents we surveyed generally felt satisfied with and in control of the opportunities available to them to make choices over schools, subjects, and extra-curricular activities, both within primary and secondary schools.

- The opportunity to choose between non-fee paying schools is constrained by the catchment area system, both at primary and secondary level – the parents interviewed expressed strong opinions these constraints hindered choice at secondary level.

- Parents perceived that the process of appealing against the allocation of catchment secondary schools was particularly 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 pupils also preferred to attend non-fee paying schools because they are mixed.

- Some of the secondary pupils interviewed reported feeling pressure from teachers when making subject choices and many complained that the timetabling of optional subjects meant that they could not take all of their preferred choices at GCSE.

- It appeared that primary schools often struggled to provide a broad range of extra-curricular activities – in contrast, the breadth of activities in (state) secondary schools was widely praised by pupils and parents alike.

- Many pupils and parents defended the quality of non-fee paying secondary schools in Jersey, suggesting that they an equivalent quality of education to private schools.

- However, it was also widely acknowledged that (some) state secondary schools attract a poor reputation, mainly because of standards of behaviour and academic achievement are perceived to be lower – some pupils, parents and teachers felt that this was unfair.

- Employers perceived that state school pupils risked facing disadvantages within the labour market and suggested that state schools would benefit from stronger links with business and that school leavers' skills could be better matched to the job market

Introduction

This chapter considers the question of 'opportunity' within the Jersey school system. Three different but related aspects of opportunity are considered here: The opportunity for pupils and their families to make decisions regarding schooling; the opportunity for pupils to

exercise these decisions, with regards to choosing a school, selecting their preferred subjects (at secondary level), and take part in extra-curricular activities; the opportunities which pupils are perceived to as a result of their education, for instance when trying to find a job or access further education. In short, this chapter explores whether pupils in Jersey's schools have the opportunity to make and exercise their desired choices within the education system. It must be stressed that this research was based on an engagement with the attitudes, perceptions and experiences of pupils, parents, teachers, and other stakeholders (such as local businesspeople). Therefore, this research cannot provide an assessment of the extent to which opportunities were realized (for instance, in terms of the number of pupils who were able to access their preferred schools, take their chosen subjects, or pursue their desired career path after leaving school). Instead, the value of this chapter lies in the fact that it sheds light on how pupils, parents, teachers, and other stakeholders felt about these important choices and the potential constraints on making life-decisions both now and in the future.

Primary Schooling

Decision-making in primary education

Figure 17 compares reported levels of satisfaction in the school decision-making process, between pupils, parents, and teachers. Overall, primary pupils were happy with their school choices[9] and their after-school activity choices[10] (Figure 17.1). Pupils also reported that they felt well supported[11] in making decisions about their schooling. Importantly, pupils also felt that they had the opportunity to choose their preferred school[12] and their preferred after-school activities[13] (Figure 17.1). Parents of children in primary school generally reported similar levels of satisfaction with the decision-making process to pupils (Figure 17.2). Parents stated that the most important people in helping them make a decision about which school to select was their own children (28%), government agencies (19%) and teachers (15%) (see Figure 15). Parents also appeared far more willing to defer to their children's influence over decisions over after school activities (67%), when compared to decisions over school choice itself. While parents felt they were strongly involved in decision-making[14], the majority (69%) also found it helpful to talk to other people about these decisions. Parents did not feel that their expectations impinge on their children's choices[15], no do the expectations of teachers[16].

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[9] $x = 4.5$, SD = 1.0

[10] $x = 4.1$, SD = 1.1

[11] $x = 3.8$, SD = 1.3

[12] $x = 3.7$, SD = 1.6

[13] $x = 3.9$, SD = 1.5

[14] $x = 4.3$, SD = 1.0

[15] $x = 2.9$, SD = 1.7

Figure 15: Important Factors in Decision Making for Parents
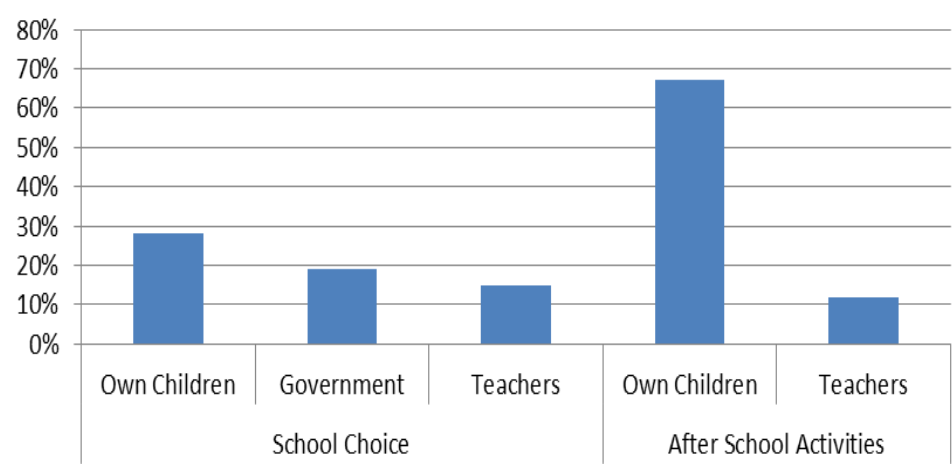
Figure 17.3 suggests that teachers have more negative perceptions of satisfaction with school decisions making processes than pupils and parents. This may suggest a lack in confidence in the decision making process itself. On the other hand, teachers are satisfied with the level of school choice in the system[17] and in the range of activities offered to students[18]. They believe students to be reasonably well-supported and that they receive sufficient information[19]. Nearly all the teacher surveyed (92%) felt that their pupils ultimately make good choices. Teachers considered parents to be most important person in helping pupils make decisions (see Figure 16). Despite the fact that most pupils and parents cited teachers as a key source of information, teachers themselves perceived their own influence as relatively insignificant[20].

Figure 16: Important people in decision-making (teachers)

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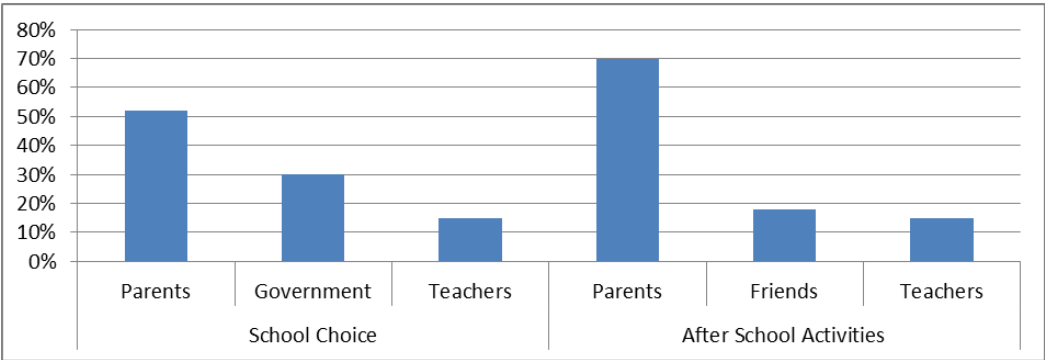
[16] $x = 2.1$, SD = 1.5

[17] $x = 3.1$, SD = 0.9

[18] $x = 3.6$, SD = 0.9

[19] $x = 3.4$, SD = 0.9

[20] $x = 2.4$, SD = 1.2

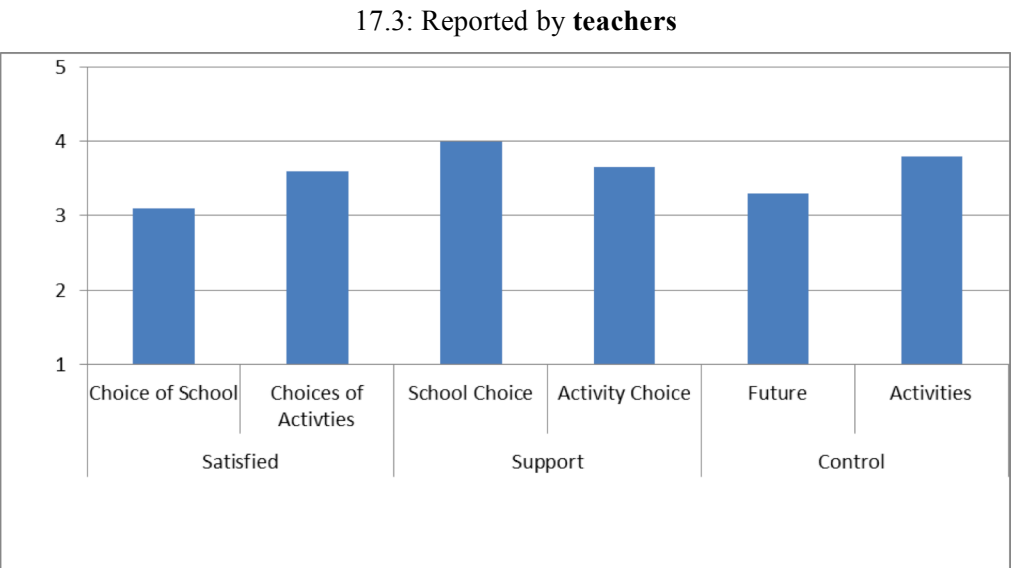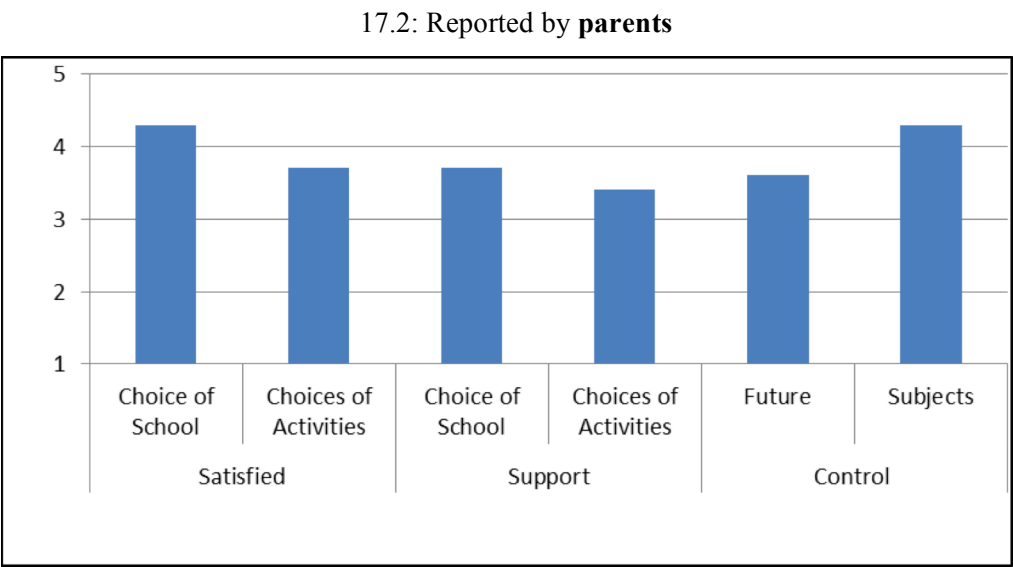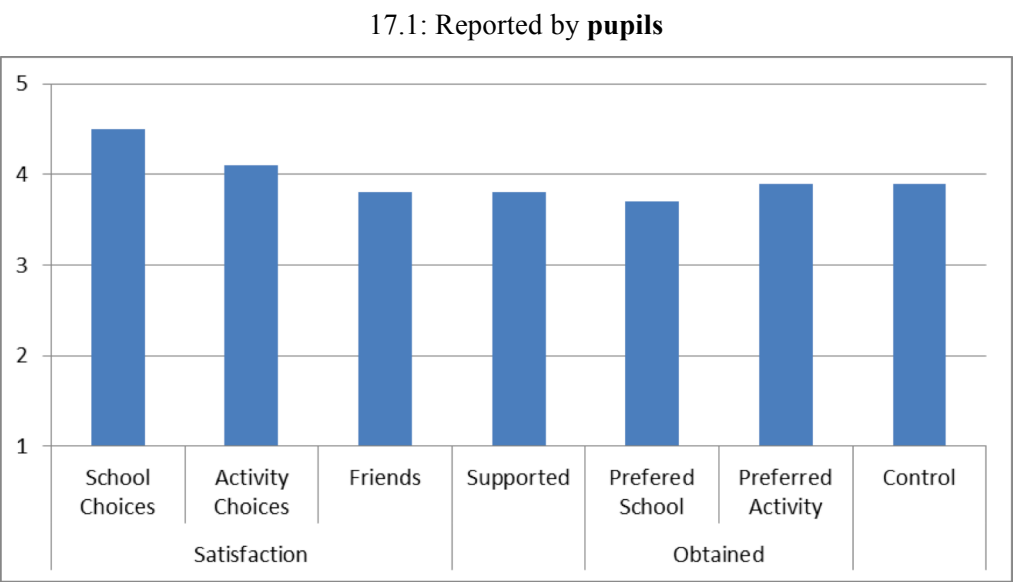**Figure 17: Satisfaction with the decision-making process**

17.1: Reported by **pupils**

17.2: Reported by **parents**

17.3: Reported by **teachers**

Opportunity and primary school choice

Interviewees reflected on the opportunities available for primary pupils. One of the main issues discussed was the catchment area system, which was felt to limit opportunities to choose a school. This was in evidence not only among parents and pupils, but also among headteachers:

> *Because the choices in Jersey are governed by catchment I don't think they see it as a choice, but we do encourage parents to discuss with their children why are they going to the school they go for. [Primary school headteacher]*

> *I don't know how much choice the children have generally because they are expected to go to their catchment [schools]. I don't know how much questioning they do about that. [Primary school headteacher]*

> *There is the catchment system so that if you live in this area you probably go to that school unless it is one of the private schools. [Primary school headteacher]*

Teachers, parents and pupils therefore appeared to be well aware of the overarching constraints on the school choices available to those living in Jersey.

Ultimately, it appeared to be the case that the opportunities for primary pupils and parents to choose a school were not characterised by a high degree of freedom, but were instead contingent on a host of factors. As one primary school teacher summarised:

> *I think parents have the ultimate say and this tends to be based on finances, catchment, where they went to school, current opinion of the schools and pressure [as a result of] where parents work. [Primary school teacher]*

The catchment area system also poses some challenges in itself, especially for families with high levels of residential mobility (such as many recent migrants):

> *Sometimes Portuguese families are very mobile in their addresses because of the accommodation issue in Jersey. So sometimes families move frequently and it's the residential address that makes the choice for catchment area school. [State primary school headteacher]*

Despite the fact that the survey results suggested that pupils and parents were generally satisfied with the school decision-making process, it appears that these results must be viewed in context of the perceived constraints of the catchment area system, coupled with the differential opportunities between the public and fee-paying school systems. More broadly, as the second section of this chapter reveals, school choice at secondary level also appeared as a far more contentious issue than at primary school level.

Opportunity for extra-curricular activities in primary schools

It can be argued that the ability to choose from a range of extra-curricular activities is an important indicator of the opportunities children have for development and socialisation in school. We found that primary pupils themselves did not necessarily feel that they were exercising their own extra-curricular choices, but instead that their parents' influence was the main factor:

> *With the piano lessons, my mum really wanted me to go there and to make my mum a favour, I did it! [Year 6 pupil]*

> *I had very little freedom for choosing extra-curriculum activities because swimming ... it was my mum telling me to take those lessons. [Year 6 pupil]*

It is not surprising that parents have an influence over children's extra-curricular choices and the pupils interviewed often discussed this in neutral or positive terms, for instance:

> *With tennis, my dad and mum are very good tennis players. My dad has coached me and that helped me to go there. [Year 6 pupil]*

> *With the swimming lessons no choice at all, but I found that I actually enjoyed them. [Year 6 pupil]*

However, some pupils spoke directly about a lack of freedom over some activity choices:

> *With the extra-curriculum choice I had less freedom; like Portuguese, I hadn't any freedom. [Year 6 pupil]*

> *For Portuguese, I didn't get any freedom at all. [Year 6 pupil]*

It would, therefore, be inaccurate to consider pupils' activities choices as an area over which they necessarily have full and independent freedom of choice.

Some primary school pupils attend after-school activities both within their schools and at private sessions outside school, though others report not being able to afford the latter but being aware of their benefit. Schools seemed conscious of this disadvantage and had instituted compensatory measures by providing extra support for some children to attend after-school activities, as two headteachers explained:

> *Inevitably for the minority group their financial circumstances are more restricted so their parents will not always pay for private lesson. So we make sure we offer that opportunity; and if we organise a trip we make sure everyone can go even if they can't pay, so we privately talk to those families and give a donation through a charity or whatever.*

> *There are [...] some children who have very enriched lives and do an awful lot of things while others can sit at home and play with their Xboxes and don't have the*

stimulation. We try to compensate and the curriculum is very important to us in terms of creating opportunities for children that they might not get at home. But you can't compensate for everything.[…] All our activities and visits are free. We raise money when we can and we get a coach budget from the department to take children out, so there are no additional charges.

However, in addition to financial restrictions, there are the other more usual limitations on the after-school activities which primary schools can provide:

In the school setting, children have free choice, but there are some restrictions we have to put on group numbers or by ability. [Primary school headteacher]

Some pupils were conscious of these restrictions to access.

In Jersey primary schools, extra-curricular activities tend to be seasonal, like football, cricket and netball. However, stakeholders report that the willingness and availability of staff to run such activities poses a particular challenge, as there is often no contractual requirement for teachers to run after-school activities:

You have to have teachers that have certain gifts or want to play certain sports. So, for instance, […] I don't have someone to play chess so I don't have a chess club, but it has to be down to the expertise of the teacher. [Primary school headteacher]

If staff commitments allowed, there should be more after-school clubs, but pressure on teachers is very high and it would mean they had to give up some of their time to supervise an after-school club instead of being at their desks marking, preparing and planning. [Primary school teacher]

Extra-curricular activities should be provided by sport /arts coaches rather than teachers. If this were possible, the rather limited number of opportunities currently available [could] be extended. [Primary school teacher]

One of our participating primary schools, in an effort to overcome the limitations of depending only on teachers to run extra-curriculum activities, had invited people from the local community to run after-school activities:

It's trying to get people from the community to give as many experiences as we can, like the gardening club which is run by [someone] from the community. [Primary school headteacher]

There are, therefore, a number of constraints on the nature and availability of extra-curricular activities offered by schools which, in addition to pressures from parents, mean that pupils are not always free to pursue the full range of activities.

Secondary Schooling

Decision-making in secondary education

Respondents to the questionnaire were asked a number of questions regarding decision-making for secondary schools pupils. Pupils referred to their parents as most important (81.0%) in helping to make a choice of secondary school (see Figure 18.1). Teachers were only reported to play an important role in the choice of subjects (34%), albeit still to a lesser extent than parents (44%). Support for making decisions about after-school activities was divided between parents (34%), teachers (25%) and friends (15%). Pupils also reported that talking to other people about choice of school (57%) and subject choice (67%) was helpful and many agreed that their parents were very involved in all decision-making processes[21].

Parents cited a variety of influences regarding their children's choice of school (see Figure 18.2). Their own children were seen to be most important in this decision-making process, followed by teachers, extended family, and government agencies. Subject choices were mainly influenced by teachers (51%) and, to a slightly lesser extent, parent's own children (35%), while after-school activities were mainly decided on by the children themselves (70%). The majority (65%) found that talking to others when they were choosing a school for their children was helpful, but this happened less (48%) when choosing subjects.

Teachers echoed pupils in reporting that parents were the most important sources of information on school choices (61%). A far lower proportion felt that 'formal' sources of information, namely from teachers (15%) and government agencies (17%), were equally important influences. This changes significantly for subject choice, where teachers saw themselves as the most important source of information (76%). This contrasted with the view of pupils, who saw parents as a greater influence than teachers. This pattern was reversed for after-school activities, where teachers felt that parents were the main source of information (64%), compared to teachers (29%). Teachers also thought it was important for pupils to talk to other students before choosing their school (84%) and their subjects (77%).

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[21] $x = 3.9$, SD = 1.2

Figure 18: Important people in the decision-making process for secondary schooling

18.1: Reported by **pupils**
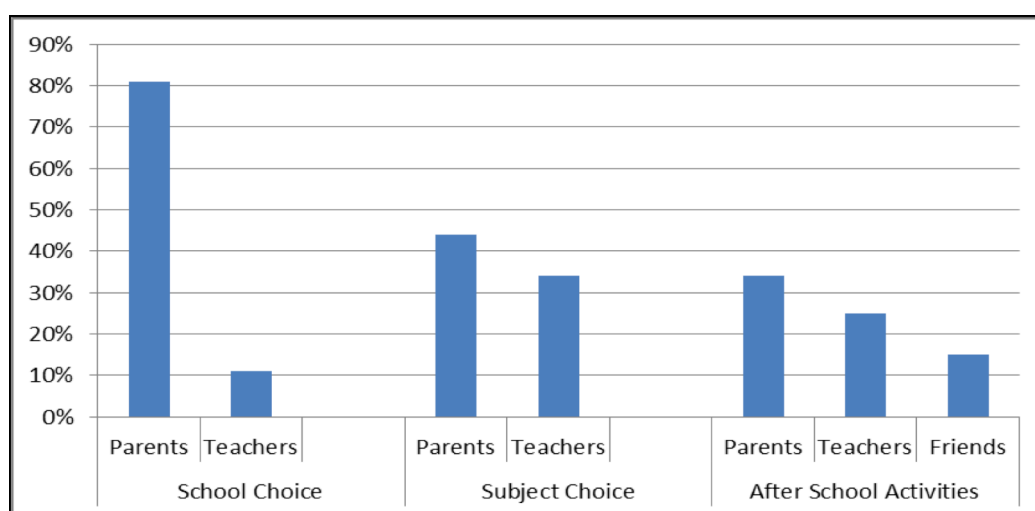
18.2: Reported by **parents**
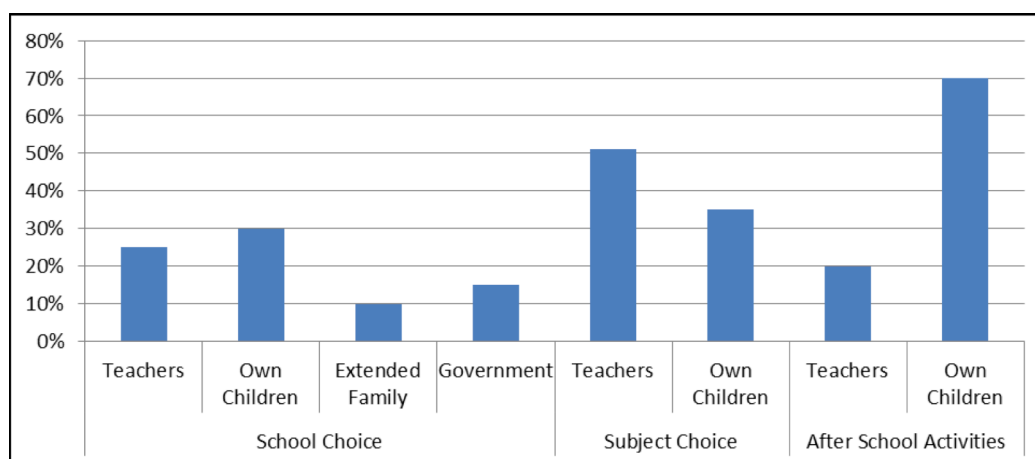
18.3: Reported by **teachers**
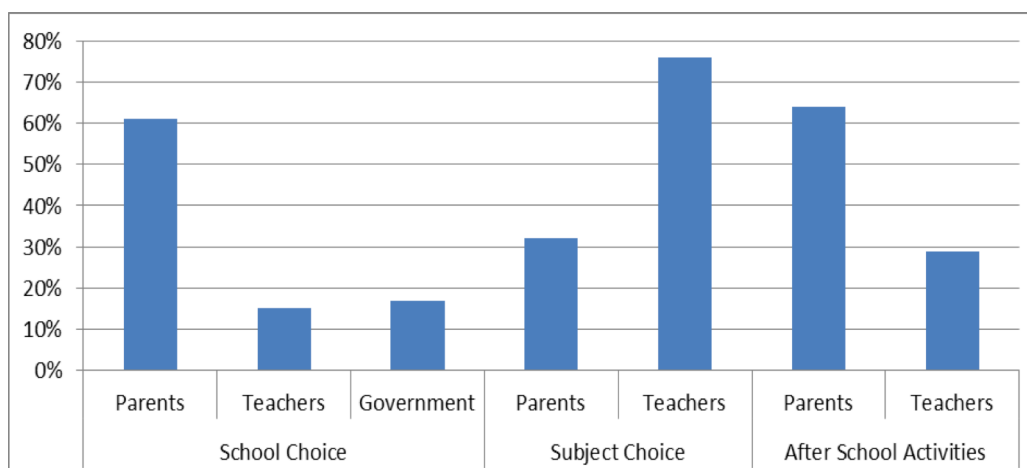
Pupils were asked how satisfied they were with the decision-making processes for secondary school (see Figure 19). On average, pupils were very satisfied with the process of choosing a secondary school[22], subjects[23], and after-school activities[24]. During the decision-making process they felt relatively well-supported by their primary schools[25], albeit to a lesser extent than by their future secondary schools[26]. Importantly, pupils felt in control when making decisions about their future[27], choosing school subject[28] and deciding on extra-curricular activities[29]. Students also believed that their friends and peers had similar experiences to their own.

Figure 19: Pupils' satisfaction with the decision-making process for secondary school
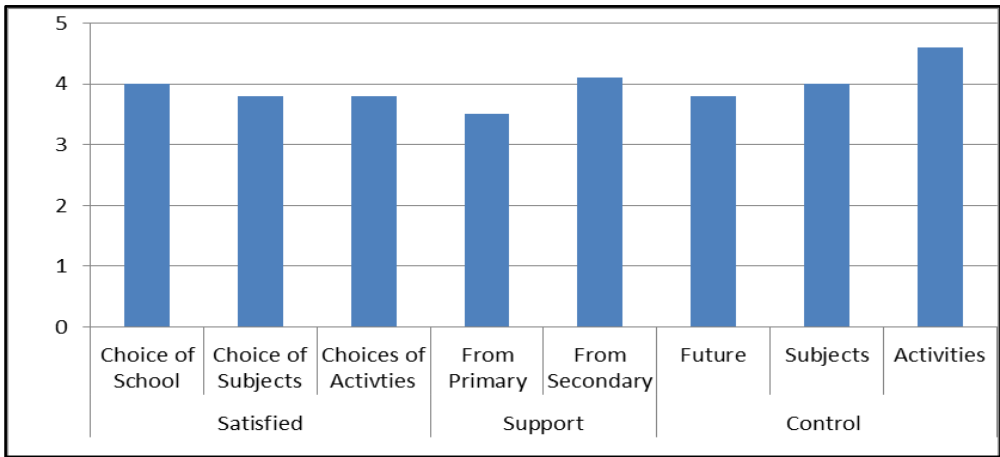
Overall, parents were also satisfied with the school choice process (see Figure 20). They believed that their children were firmly in control of the process but also reported feeling adequately involved themselves[30]. In addition, they felt from their own observations that most other children they knew had similar opportunities[31].

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[22] $x = 4.0$, SD = 1.3

[23] $x = 3.8$, SD = 1.1

[24] $x = 3.8$, SD = 1.2

[25] $x = 3.5$, SD = 1.4

[26] $x = 4.1$, SD = 1.2

[27] $x = 3.8$, SD = 1.2

[28] $x = 4.0$, SD = 1.2

[29] $x = 4.6$, SD = 1.2

[30] $x = 4.5$, SD = 0.8

[31] $x = 3.7$, SD = 1.3

Figure 20: Parents' satisfaction with the decision-making process for secondary school
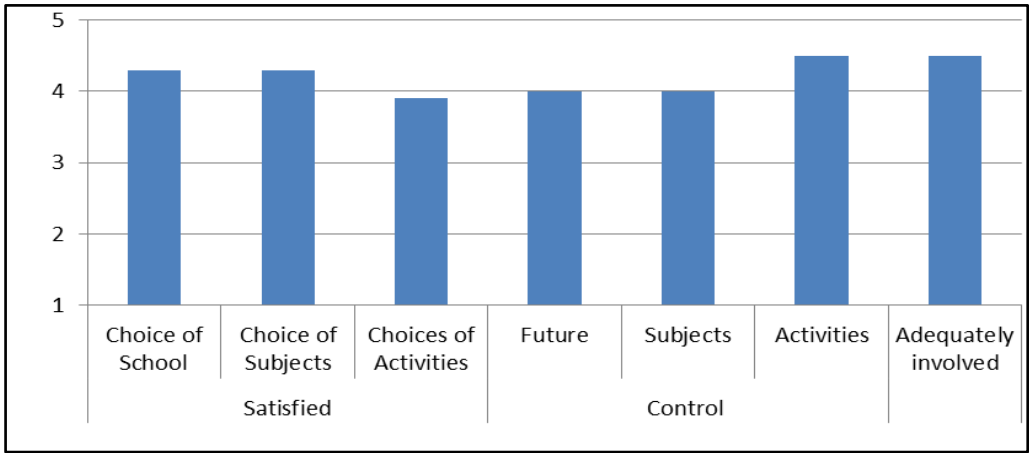
Teachers also perceived there to be a moderate level of satisfaction with the decision-making processes in secondary schools (see Figure 21). However, the perceived satisfaction with school choice[32] in particular was lower amongst teachers than it was for pupils and parents. Teachers reported that they believe that pupils are in control of the decision-making process for all their school choices and also believed that pupils make good choices about their schools (85%), subject choices (81%), and activities (98%). Furthermore, teachers felt that pupils are reasonably well-supported in their decision-making by primary schools[33], but more so by secondary schools[34].

Figure 21: Teachers' satisfaction with the decision-making process for secondary school

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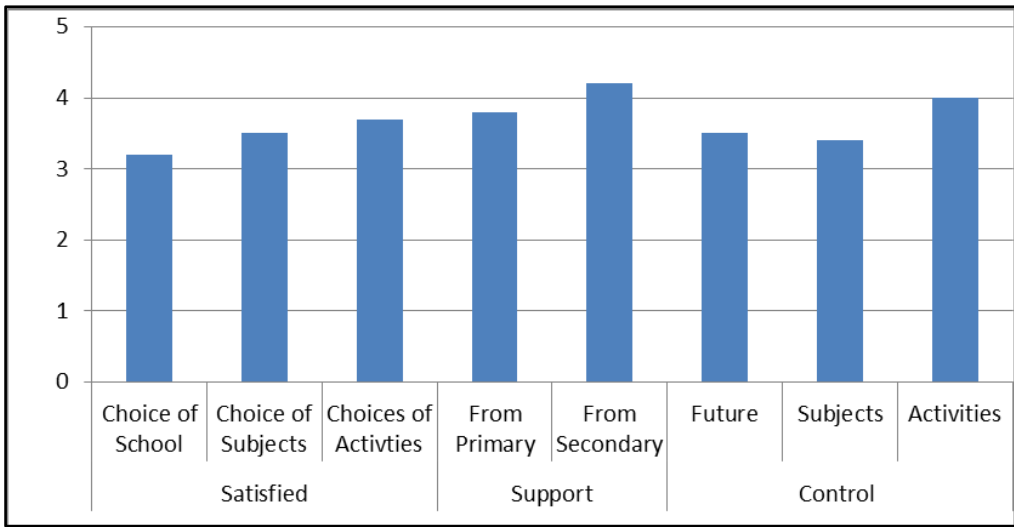
[32] $x = 3.2$, SD = 1.2

[33] $x = 3.8$, SD = 1.0

[34] $x = 4.2$, SD = 0.9

Opportunity and secondary school choice

Interviews provide some additional insight into the opportunities for pupils and families to pursue their desired secondary school choices. For the most part, the catchment area system does significantly constrain the choice between non-paying schools. Other aspects of academic and financial selection also function, with regards to the fee-paying sector, as one headteacher explained:

> *Jersey is a highly selective system. Obviously some parents would choose their children to go to the fee-paying sector so there is selection all along the line in Jersey. [State secondary school headteacher]*

The perceptions and experiences of pupils and parents must therefore be understood in the context of these concerns.

Many of the pupils interviewed appeared to have relatively pragmatic views towards the choice of school:

> *I am going to [state secondary school named] and I visited the school and I know a lot of people and family who go there. It's also the closest. [Year 6 pupil]*

> *I decided to go to [state secondary school named]. I've got the information from my brother who is attending there and I visited it before. It's the closest from my house anyway. [Year 6 pupil]*

Pupils did not generally reflect on the limitations of the catchment area system in this regard, although some appeared more aware of the opportunities to choose between fee-paying and non-fee paying schools. However, many pupils reflected on this in matter-of-fact terms:

> *I don't really think there is much of a difference. I've looked at one that is and one that is not and there is not much of a difference. The teachers are both nice in each school and the people. The only difference is that private schools just have girls or just have boys, and the public schools are mixed. [Year 6 pupil]*

> *I don't really think there is any difference of them. The public school is just where everyone goes to if they like. [Year 6 pupil]*

Some pupils did appear to perceive a difference in quality between private and state schools, although once again this was discussed in quite pragmatic terms:

> *It was always going to be [state secondary school named] because since the idea of secondary school came we don't have the money to pay for a private school. We couldn't afford it. I know that private schools are better than public schools, but I think that I will learn well in [state secondary school named]. [Year 6 boy]*

A smaller number of pupils expressed stronger views, both in favour or against the prospect of private secondary education:

I don't really think it's too different because they teach the same things, but private you have to pay and they are not mixed schools, so it doesn't feel comfortable. [Year 6 pupil]

When my brother first moved here, which meant if I was to get in it would make it easier. So I was never going to be in a public secondary 'cause my dad didn't want me to go there. He wanted me to have the same opportunities as my brothers who have been to Russia and Brazil with their school. [Year 6 pupil]

As one would expect, having a particular preference towards fee-paying education appeared as a matter of individual and family circumstances, rather than a reflection of systematic differences (aside from the fact that fee-paying schools were single-sex).

However, this perception of equality of opportunity over school choices was not as widely shared amongst parents. The most common complaint related to the lack of choice afforded by the catchment area system:

I think there should be definitely more choice, it shouldn't be down to the catchment area, I think they should listen more to the parents not just expect that they have to go to their catchment school. [Mother of a Year 11 student]

I don't think you've got a lot of choice. You either put them in a place where you have to pay or go to your catchment [school]. There is nothing in between. I think some of the reasons are slightly unfair because if you've already got siblings here and you need to come here as well, they make it very difficult. [Mother of a Year 7 student]

The parents we interviewed appeared to feel less strongly regarding the opportunity to access fee-paying or private schools. Some of the parents interviewed appeared to favour non-fee paying secondary school on the grounds of diversity, or equality of opportunity:

Even if I had the money, I wouldn't have sent them to private schools. I think that if they are going to do well, they will do well. It all depends on the child. Sending them to private schools is not going to make them any better than at a state school. [Mother of a Year 11 student]

I could have sent my children to private education, but not only the cost comes into it but I don't really think that it's so much benefit because the children have all the opportunities here [at state school] that they would get [at a private school]; probably they get a few more. [Mother of a Year 7 student]

We did look into private schooling, but I decided against it. It would be good for them socially to learn to get along with other types of people. [Mother of Year 8 and 9 students]

Overall, interviews with pupils and parents did not give the people felt their opportunities were hindered by the restrictions on access to Jersey's non-fee paying schools.

For their part, the teachers interviewed from fee-paying and private schools defended the equality of opportunity offered by their schools. Several interviewees mentioned the provision of bursaries in this regard:

> *We have a good budget available for bursaries and we provide bursaries when we can. I have never said 'no' to someone who meets the criteria and is not financially able to come here. We have it as a target that 10% of our students are on bursaries. So we would fund the fees, the uniform, anything required; and subject related trips. [Private school headteacher]*

> *We have a wonderful and very generous bursary scheme so parents that can't afford the fees can apply to the school for a bursary. It's nearly £100,000 per year that we spend on bursaries. When you consider that the fee for the whole year is about £4,000 you can see that we do 20 to 30 pupils and some parents will get a full scholarship; it depends on their financial needs. [Private school headteacher]*

Nevertheless, one state secondary school teacher suggested that these opportunities need to be more widely communicated:

> *I think that bursaries at private schools should be more [widely] publicised and allow more able students the opportunity to access the education and opportunities at such selective schools.*

With regards to academic selection, another private school headteacher argued that their school was not unduly selective in this regard:

> *Our selection is based on a minimum on 100 CATs score and 100 is the national average. If you were a selective school in the UK you would be probably looking at 120+. We are not highly selective academically. [Private school headteacher]*

These insights appear to suggest that the fee paying sector in Jersey is satisfied with the equality of opportunity they offer. However, this was not always reflected in the opinions of pupils:

> *The private schools are quite unfair [because] they have a test to join. Some people would like to go to a private school, but they know they wouldn't be able to do well [in] a test. [Year 7 boy in state secondary school]*

Understandably, the issue of academic selection within fee-paying schools appeared to be contentious.

Other interviewees also argued that the pressure placed on pupils to achieve the academic standards necessary to access certain secondary schools, in particular Hautlieu, had a discernable detrimental effect on pupils:

One of the highest achievers in this school, his confidence is in tatters at the moment and it's of extreme concern that the education system that we have in Jersey is supposed to be 'every child cares' and 'every child matters', but actually the system that we have is creating some severe issues for some of the students. [Secondary school teacher]

I've got a student at the moment who is actually making himself physically sick with the decision of having to go and the pressure he is feeling that he is going to disappoint his parents if he decides to stay here. [Secondary school teacher]

This suggests that the opportunity for students to attend a selective school (based on academic achievement) could be experienced as a source of stress and anxiety for some pupils. The point here is not to criticise the policies of selective school(s) themselves, but rather to acknowledge that the pressure to achieve these criteria does raise issues for pupils at a particularly critical and sensitive stage in their development.

A final set of comments from parents concerned the appeals process, which can allow families to make a special case for their children to attend a non-catchment school. The appeals process for secondary schools appeared to be more complicated than for primary schools:

If they would have to go to another school, if they had spaces, I don't know. I believe you are offered a place. There is an appeal system where you put your case forward to a panel. [Mother of students in Years 9 and 10]

My other daughter didn't get into this school. I had to appeal because I had two other children in this school already, and she was bullied in her other school so eventually I got her in here, but it was quite difficult. [Mother of a Year 11 student]

In contrast, one primary head suggested that the process was relatively straightforward:

Parents don't have to do an awful lot; they have to fill in the paperwork to say that they either accept the place or not and want to appeal.

Overall, the interviews did not provide sufficient detail for a fuller assessment of the appeals process. However, it would seem essential for equality of choice and opportunity that this process is made as clear and transparent as possible for parents.

Opportunities within the secondary curriculum

Our interviews also investigated the opportunities which secondary school pupils had to make informed choices when selecting subject/curriculum options. Secondary schools believe that they offer a good variety of curricular choices:

> *Off the top of my head, they have something like 25 subjects to choose from and they can choose three. [State secondary school headteacher]*

> *We have one of the widest ranges of academic choices on the island for GCSE and BTECs, and the curriculum is broad and balanced. It's one of the best for the different qualifications. We have vocational courses for students to follow as well and work experience for the less able students. [State secondary school teacher]*

Many students interviewed also described having freedom to make their desired subject choices:

> *Because you've been in school for two years, you know what you want to do. And I said to my parents what I wanted to do and they accepted that, so when it came to choosing subjects it was kind of simple. [Year 9 student in private secondary school]*

> *You get a lot of freedom because my mum and dad wanted me to choose certain subjects, but they don't force me. It's completely my decision and I think I made the right decisions. [Year 9 student]*

Interestingly, however, our interviews gave the impression that pupils in private secondary schools felt more pressure – especially from parents – when choosing subjects:

> *I had freedom from my teachers, but I didn't have that much freedom from my parents 'cause they wanted me to do subjects that are better for the future. [Year 9 boy in private secondary school]*

> *I prepared my GCSE options and my parents disagreed with one of the options I chose because they believe it wouldn't help me to get anywhere.*

A comment from one mother of a pupil in a private school helped to elucidate the reasons for favouring certain subjects over others:

> *There are some courses that for the amount of money I am going to pay … like Medicine or Law. If you do something like History of Art, it is not so clear at the end where you are actually going to build your career.*

Broadly speaking, these quotes suggest a relatively normal set of opportunities and processes underlying pupils' choice of subjects in secondary school.

Some pupils felt more strongly that they experienced undue pressure from their school or teachers to choose certain subjects. As one pupil explained:

The teachers try to bias us to do their subjects. They try to make it sound better than it really is. When we went to their room to talk about the subject, they say stuff that you do practical, but if you ask some of the students they tell you different. So it's hard to choose. [Immigrant Year 9 boy in state secondary school]

This was also discussed by some pupils in private secondary schools:

The thing about this school is that it thinks a lot about its results so it is really like: "you should really choose this subject". I think that in some ways that test is wrong because some people have really good talents other than subjects and when it comes to academic subjects they are less good, so I don't think it's right.

From a teacher's point of view, however, it was normal to exert some influence over subject choice for the sake of pupil's attainment and well-being:

[Students] mostly have the freedom, but teachers have input because they know the students and they'd tell the student the situation if they would struggle. [Teaching assistant in state secondary school]

Once again, therefore, it cannot be argued that these aspects of pupil's experiences of secondary education are a particular cause for concern, or that they are unique to Jersey.

However, there are other restrictions in place when choosing optional subjects in both public and private schools. In a number of schools, subjects are organised in particular 'blocks' in such a way that they can inhibit certain choices. Other schools canvass their pupils' preferred combination of subjects in advance so that option blocks can be arranged to accommodate as many preferences as possible. For teachers' perspective, the block system worked well:

Sometimes we get an email from a parent saying that they can't do a particular subject because of the blocking system options, and then we would look at that to see what we can do. We don't get too many of those. We don't have a situation where there is a cap for each subject. Generally we try to support the wishes of a student who wants to do a particular range of subjects. [State secondary school headteacher]

However, this view was not supported by many of the pupils interviewed (at the same school):

There were some subjects I couldn't pick because they were in the same box where I wanted to pick other subjects. [Year 9 student]

I was annoyed because I wanted to do Spanish and History, and they were in the same block [so] I had to pick one. [Year 9 student]

Our interviews included a significant number of similar comments from pupils. Moreover, some interviewees clearly perceived the block system as a source of inequality between schools:

The option blocks are what stop us really. If we didn't have option blocks we'd be happier because you get to pick your favourite subjects and you wouldn't have to make the difficult choice between the two. The blocks aren't really even because they are not really mixed. It's the best ones in one block and the worst one in another block. [Year 9 student]

The blocks are terrible here. Other schools have different blocks. It's obviously [the] school that has chosen these blocks and I think it should be the Education Department to choose the blocks, equal for all schools, because we hear about other kids in other schools doing their favourite subjects. We can't because they haven't equalled out all the subjects. [Year 9 student]

One pupil even suggested that the restrictions in subject choices were a source of disadvantage in accessing further education or employment:

We have three options and I would like to have four because if you have four when you are older you have a wider range of different jobs to choose from. Because I didn't have History it will be a disadvantage to doing Law. [Year 9 student]

Given the number of comments received and the strength of feeling on the part of many secondary pupils, the practice of creating subject 'blocks' for certain curriculum options should be explored (and possibly addressed) as a potential inequality in the opportunities enjoyed by some pupils, on the basis of their particular subject preferences.

Opportunities for extra-curricular activities in secondary schools

Our interviews also explored the opportunities which pupils had to undertake extra-curricular activities. We found a broader choice of activities, running either in the lunch hour or outside of the school day, and with no marked difference between the public and private sector. All the schools we visited were very proud of their extra-curricular choices:

They have a lot at this school; an awful lot. There is sport, drama, music. We have a very good Combined Cadet Force. I think it's fair to say that this school has more activities than any other school on the island. [Private secondary headteacher]

There are a lot of things going on. We've got music, drama, revision classes, chess club, lots of sporting activities and the dedicated Portuguese lessons. [State secondary headteacher]

There are lots of clubs on offer and sporting activities, choir, drama, etc. So we have wide range of activities. [State secondary headteacher]

This was echoed by some of the parents we interviewed:

> *[The pupils] couldn't choose anything more. They get opportunities every lunch hour for things they can do and after-school, as well as the sports. They couldn't squeeze anymore in. [Mother of a Year 7 student in a state secondary school]*

Pupils were generally keen to take advantage of extra-curricular activities and seem satisfied with the choices available. Pupils also appeared to see such activities as having a positive impact on their academic performance, as well as their social lives:

> *I think it's often good to do a few [activities] because in that way you are not stuck at home doing nothing and you can be with your friends after school having fun. [State secondary school student]*

> *Yes the social thing as well and it makes you better at school and you want to carry on. [Private secondary school student]*

> *I thought it would be good idea because I really enjoy exercise and also it's a good way to meet new friends from other schools. [Secondary school student]*

Due to the wide range of after-school activities on offer within all schools on Jersey, students in both state and private schools report being 'very busy most days of the week' if they do take advantage of the opportunities available to them. Of course, not all pupils do choose to take part in extra-curricular activities – this was generally seen as unproblematic and down to individual choice – although a few pupils suggested that schools could do more to promote the breadth of activities available.

However, several issues were raised in relation to the opportunities to take advantage of the activities offered, especially in state secondary schools. Firstly, some pupils pointed to gender disparities in the range of sports available:

> *There should be more activities for girls to do; for example, for girls there is only netball. [Year 7 girl in state secondary school]*

> *[I want] to play rugby in the school but there is no girls' rugby. [Immigrant Year 9 girl in state secondary school]*

A second issue related to the limited time frame for certain activities (although this was often due to the seasonal nature of some sports). Nevertheless, providers could consider provision for indoor or alternatives for year-round participation;

> *You don't really get much time to do each sport. You get a couple of months and that's it. It's not much and it's a bit boring. [Year 9 boy in state secondary school]*

> *I preferred primary school because you only get one thing but when you do that thing you can do it much longer than you can do here, because here you only do it for a month or two. [Year 9 boy in state secondary school]*

The third related to the poor quality of instruction in some activities.

> *In music lessons, we are doing the same thing over and over again, and we start playing games because it's boring. Our music teacher is really laid back. [Year 7 boy in state secondary school]*

These issues were not particularly widespread, although they do point to potential areas for development and improvement in the extra-curricular opportunities afforded to pupils.

Outcomes and Life Chances

The previous sections have specifically explored how pupils and parents perceive and experience the opportunities offered in terms of school choice, subject choice and extra-curricular activities. In contrast, this section considers the broader question of the perceived opportunities provided by education in Jersey in terms of outcomes and life chances. This section draws on a broader range of interview quotes, including from stakeholders in the business community.

Academic attainment

The majority of interviewees suggested that there is little variation in the quality of education between Jersey's schools, especially at secondary level. Instead, it was suggested that the 'sorting' of more academically-able students into fee-paying schools created a false impression of lower attainment within state secondary schools. Teachers in the state sector appeared particularly conscious of this issue:

> *In Jersey there is not a lot of difference between the schools because we are so small and there is not a huge difference between 11 to 16 schools. [State secondary teacher]*

> *The actual access to secondary education I think it's equal, so it tends to be that parents are happy and have good reports about it. [State secondary headteacher]*

> *What we've been pushing for is to look more at the value that we add to the student, so if the student comes with a target grade E and they achieve a C they are making value of two grades and that's what we view at the school as success. But not every school views that obviously and it's harder for Hautlieu when they have 99% A* to C success rate. How much can you add on the value if they won't reveal their value added? So OK, if they have bright students, how are they pushed and how is the school stretching them? And that's the question we've got to be asking more. [Public secondary school teaching assistant]*

The question of whether 'value added' was adequately reflected in school's perceived academic performance was also reflected on by both parents and pupils:

Unfortunately the island is structured in such a way that if you can afford to pay then you get much better choice. [This] is not to say that any of the state secondary schools are bad - I don't think they are - but there is a high proportion of children being educated privately so the academic results of state schools are slammed by circumstances. [Parent of a Year 6 boy]

Public schools don't have high grades, but we can't blame the school as most of the high grade people leave for Hautlieu, and then the people staying behind have lower grades, which doesn't look good on the school, but is not the school's fault. [Immigrant Year 9 boy]

The question of whether variations between schools' academic attainment constituted an adequate measure of the quality of education being offered therefore appears to be a particular issue amongst Jersey's school. Moreover, this issue was perceived to be a result of the sorting of more academically-able pupils into selective schools.

More broadly, many of our interviewees appeared to perceive that schools offered a similar level and quality of education:

Here you get exactly the same education as private schools. [Year 7 girl in state secondary school]

No, there is no difference because all the schools are going to learn more or less the same things and are going to help you to get to GCSE and do well in them. [Year 9 student in private secondary school]

Instead, the question of academic attainment was often discussed in terms of individual pupils and their desire to work hard and achieve:

I am of the opinion that if you are able you will achieve in a public school whatever you can achieve somewhere else. It's down to you personally. [Father of a Year 7 student in state secondary school]

This position was particularly common amongst pupils at selective/fee-paying schools:

Everyone has the same ability. It's just how you prepare yourself; how hard working you are. [Student in private secondary school]

There is nothing really stopping them from working as hard and [making] sure they get the same grades and results. [Student in private secondary school]

Of course, the assertion that educational outcomes are down to individual pupils is problematic, as schools and teachers undoubtedly have a role to play. However, it does at least reflect a potentially positive attitude amongst many of those interviewed, who appeared to feel that non-fee paying schools (at least at secondary level) were not offering a discernibly lower quality of education.

Reputation and stigma

While many interviewees were quick to defend the quality of Jersey's state schools, on the other hand a number of respondents suggested that the reputation of non-fee paying schools varied considerably and, overall, were marked by a degree of stigma regarding the quality of education. The negative perceptions of some schools were relatively widespread and constituted a particular issue in relation to a potential social divide between state and private schools. This appeared to be felt quite acutely by pupils and parents in the state sector:

> *There is still a social standing on if you went to a private school in Jersey. In the ideal world you wouldn't want that, but it's there [Mother of a Year 9 student in state secondary school]*

> *If you go to a private school you are better off. It's more [about] the public opinion than the actual difference [Year 9 girl in state secondary school]*

This was also reflected by some pupils in private schools:

> *You get people here that are more focused on wanting to learn and really get work done, whereas some of the people who go to the free schools are not really bothered about school. [Year 9 boy in private secondary school]*

> *Here everyone is ready to learn something, I think in public schools sometimes you get groups of people who aren't there to learn and this sometimes affects your learning. [Year 9 boy in private secondary school]*

Needless to say, this issue was a source of frustration for those state school pupils who felt it unfairly presented their schools in a bad light:

> *People in private schools think they are better than us. They say we've got a bad reputation. It's kind of mean because they haven't been to our school and haven't [had] a lesson in it. They haven't experienced what it's like here. [Year 7 girl in state secondary school]*

The research found evidence from both within and outside of non-fee paying schools which indicated that the state school sector was perceived to suffer from negative stigma. This was especially worrying as this stigma was widely felt and discussed by pupils themselves.

Our interviews also revealed more about the factors which appeared to influence the poor reputation of some state secondary schools. Some responses indicated that pupils in fee-paying schools were seen as more 'invested' in their education because of the financial commitment involved:

> *There could be a higher risk if they don't really want to work and get into trouble; more compared to a private school where they might work more because they are*

actually paying money so they might concentrate more. [Year 9 boy in state secondary school]

I think the mentality in a public school: they don't seem to be as bothered about their education, whereas here the majority of the people get the work for the money they are paying. [Year 9 boy in private secondary school]

Your work ethic is sort of better because you are really channelled in your work 'cause you just don't want to waste the money. [Year 9 boy in private secondary school]

This attitude was most widely articulated by pupils in private schools. In turn, those in state schools suggested that fee-paying schools were better resourced:

I think there is quite a bit of difference. In private schools students seem to get a better education because they have more money and supply students with equipment and more teachers. [Immigrant Year 9 girl in state secondary school]

Perceptions of poor behaviour and classroom management constituted another widely discussed factor:

State schools seem to have a worst reputation; like there [are] more pupils who mess around than actually work. [Immigrant Year 9 girl in state secondary school]

Private schools are more strict and there is less people distracting you from your class 'cause here in a classroom there will be one odd person deciding to distract the whole class and mess around and they don't do much about it; probably sending him to an exit room. But in a private school they would punish you and you wouldn't do it again, which helps other people as well. And here you normally get away with not doing your work. They don't really bother you that much. [Immigrant Year 9 boy in state secondary school]

Schools' reputations therefore appear to reflect a range factors, largely based on assumptions regarding the differences between fee paying and non-fee paying schools. Some of these factors are external to the schools themselves (such as the financial investment of parents), while others are down to perceived effectiveness in managing pupils' behaviour and learning.

Some respondents also acknowledged that schools' reputations changed over time, or were not representative of pupils' experiences:

Schools have different reputations, but reputations change over time when a new head comes along and that reputation changes, but in the meantime another school might be going downhill slightly. [Local businessperson]

When I was in primary I didn't want to come to [state secondary school named] because of what everyone said. They said it was a bad school and bad education, and

> *I wanted to go to Les Quennevais, but now I'm here, it's not what everyone says. [Immigrant Year 9 boy in state secondary school]*

These points are important reminders that reputation is neither 'fixed', nor is it necessarily reflective of reality. However, the apparent reputational stigma attached to state schools nevertheless constitutes a worrying issue, especially within a relatively small system such as Jersey's. The impact which this potential stigma may have on schools and their pupils cannot be determined from this research, but it is worthy of further attention due to the risk that pupils may be unfairly and unnecessarily disadvantaged as a result.

Employment Opportunities

A final issue discussed by our interviewees in relation to the outcomes and life chances of pupils related to employment prospects within Jersey's labour market. Some respondents indicated that employers were particularly sensitive towards the school attended by prospective employees:

> *To get a job it is very important where you went to school. I find it ridiculous, but that's the way things work around here. If you went to [private school named] or [private school named] it will be easier to get a job. Who you know and your connections and friends are very important, especially in a business where you need to know people and bring in business. Where you went to school makes a huge difference. [Businessperson]*

On the one hand, this reflects a further aspect of the reputational advantages and disadvantages attached to certain schools:

> *Local employers may choose a student on the knowledge that they have been educated [in] particular schools. In Jersey there is a huge stigma attached to the school one attended. [School governor]*

On the other hand, however, this also reflects more tangible 'networks' of contacts which might help people in finding employment.

A number of respondents – especially stakeholders from business and industry – reflected on the relationships between schools and employers in this regard:

> *We have a strong network of, and partnerships with, employers - a whole range of careers - that could involve career mentoring, internships, work placements, CV and application workshops. Also we have employers who come and sponsor the college's activities. We also work a lot with the big companies in Jersey on apprentice schemes. [Private secondary school headteacher]*

However, at least one employer interviewed for this research suggested that non-fee paying schools were less effective at establishing links with local businesses:

> *We have very close links with the private schools. The public schools - they know about us, but they don't seem to be so involved in directing their students to other options. [Businessperson]*

Employers instead suggested that there was considerable scope for secondary schools, especially those in the non-fee paying sector, to work more closely with employers, with a view towards better equipping school leavers for the labour market:

> *I think there should be more integration between employer and schools. Let's say 14-18, that would be beneficial for both parties. There should be some assessment from the school about what an employer wants. This hasn't changed in 20-30 years. People expect students who come out of school to be able to do at least the basics. [Businessperson]*

Schools themselves may therefore have a role to play in fostering links with employers, although more research would be required before conclusions could be drawn as to exactly how Jersey's schools were performing in this respect.

More broadly, some interviewees simply suggested that the academic attainment of school leavers was higher from fee-paying and selective schools:

> *The fee-paying schools and Hautlieu are selective academically and therefore are more likely to have students go on to university, which will have an effect on their employment prospects. This does not mean that students in non-fee paying schools or those attending [state school named] have worse job prospects, but they may be different. [School governor]*

The destinations for school leaves are therefore likely to be different as a result of variations in academic attainment. However, some representatives of local businesses saw these variations in starker terms:

> *The achievement levels aren't really there from what I've seen from some of the students that are coming out [of state secondary schools]. They can't spell correctly, write or coordinate sentences at 15 and 16 years old. [Businessperson]*

This was even echoed by some pupils, who felt that academic achievement, job prospects, and the nature of education within state schools were interlinked:

> *Most people who leave private school leave with A's or A*s and they can be really successful. In the public schools, they are less strict and people can leave with really bad grades and they can't get jobs. [Year 9 student in state secondary school born to immigrant parents]*

These insights add to the cause for concern raised by the stigma apparently attached to some of Jersey's state schools.

Lastly, some respondents also raised concerns regarding the provision of vocational training within secondary education in Jersey. For instance, one employer explained how vocation education was not adequately prioritised alongside academic skills:

> *It's not available as it should be. I think the situation is improving, but everything seems to be orientated towards high value, high economic benefit, so these skills aren't at the top of everybody's agenda. I am an ex-retailer and I employ hundreds of staff, most of them with very limited education, but we gave them the opportunity to improve their skills. When you recognise that at 13 or 14 a child is not going to go the academic route, it is better to give them a more practical education and technical skills. [Businessperson]*

This was also reflected by some school leaders, who felt that the choice between A-Levels and vocational training was too stark:

> *The thing I think is not so good is when students leave us from Year 11 because they got the option of either doing the traditional academic A-Levels or vocational in Highlands, and there is no mixture of A-Levels with vocational courses, and I think that's wrong. [State secondary school headteacher]*

Some respondents saw the effect of this perceived lack of vocational training as creating a skills mismatch within Jersey's economy:

> *There is some sort of disconnection between the education system and the jobs [market]. [Businessperson]*

> *I see a lot of disengaged youngsters that come out of school who do not want to work in the financial services sector. So a lot of organisations have to bring people over from the UK because local people are not trying properly to take up the jobs at banks and financial organisation services. [Businessperson]*

It therefore appears that schools and employers may benefit from working together to ensure that school leavers have the opportunities to equip themselves with the appropriate range of skills for the local job market. Employment prospects constitute a particularly important of an individual's life chances (and also relate directly to the idea of 'capabilities' upon which this research is founded). The capability to compete freely within the labour market is paramount to ensuring that all individuals enjoy the freedom to access their chosen career paths.

Conclusion: Opportunities for pupils within Jersey's school system

This chapter has explored the opportunities to exercise choices within Jersey's school system – as they are perceived by pupils, parents, teachers, and other stakeholders. This analysis has considered opportunities in terms of reaching and making decisions; exercising those decision when choosing schools, subjects or activities; and whether those decisions might go on to enhance or constrain opportunities in terms of pupils' educational outcomes and life chances. The insights presented in this chapter in response to these three aspects of opportunity were based on interviews and survey responses which focused on attitudes, perceptions and experiences of pupils, their families, their teachers, and other stakeholders.

The survey responses revealed that pupils and parents generally felt satisfied with the opportunities available to them to make choices over schools, subjects, and extra-curricular activities. This was the case both at primary and secondary level. Parents and pupils also reportedly felt in control of this process, although many also turned to teachers, relatives, and friends or neighbours to help them make decisions about schooling. However, at secondary level, teachers were perceived by pupils to exercise less of an influence over their decision-making than at primary level. Teachers appeared to be aware of this (although, interestingly, teachers still underestimated their own influence when responding to the survey).

Despite the generally positive survey responses, however, our interviews revealed that parents did feel constrained in their opportunity to choose between non-fee paying schools as a result the catchment area system. The process of appealing against the allocation of catchment secondary schools was also discussed as particularly difficult to navigate. In contrast, pupils rarely expressed such strong feelings over school choice (at secondary level). Our interviews gave the impression that few pupils would prefer to attend an alternative fee-paying or non-catchment school. Indeed, a number of pupils in state schools expressed negative feelings towards the prospect of fee-paying schools because they offer single-sex education, or simply because they felt more aligned to non-fee paying schools as a matter of principle. Subject choice was a more contentious issue for pupils, with some reporting that they experienced an unwelcome amount of pressure from teachers when making choices and many more complaining that the timetabling of optional subjects meant that they could not take all of their preferred choices. This stood out as a possible source for concern within the state secondary sector. More positively, the breadth of activities in (state) secondary schools was widely praised by pupils and parents alike, with only a small number of concerns raised regarding the equal provision of activities for girls.

Lastly, the chapter also considered the broader question of how Jersey's schools were perceived – by pupils, parents, teachers, and other stakeholders (such as members of the

business community) – in terms of the opportunities they offered for educational outcomes. While this section was not based on measures of outcomes or life-chances (as these are beyond the scope of the research), in nonetheless shed light on how these issues were perceived by the people we interviewed. The vast majority of state school pupils and parents defended the quality of non-fee paying education in Jersey, suggesting that it offered equivalent educational opportunities to private schooling. Some private school pupils appeared more willing to challenge this position. More worryingly, this also indicated the presence of a reputational stigma attached to (some) state secondary schools. Indeed, it was also generally acknowledged that state secondary schools attract a less favourable reputation than fee-paying schools. This was generally believed to stem from perceived problems with behaviour and levels of academic achievement. However pupils, parents and teachers reflecting on this as that this as an unfair representation of the realities of state education (especially in the context of a selective system for fee-paying schools). Perhaps most worryingly, some interviewees (including representatives of employers in Jersey) also perceived state school pupils to have fewer opportunities within the labour market, both because of stigma, and also because private schools had more established links with employers. These insights constitute a cause for concern in terms of the opportunities which pupils may or may not enjoy later on in life.

CHAPTER 4: WELL-BEING

Key Findings

- Overall, parents and pupils were satisfied with their experiences of primary and secondary schooling in Jersey, which was felt to provide a supportive environment for children's learning and development.

- The transition between primary and secondary school constituted a source of anxiety for some pupils, although schools do have schemes in place help with this transition.

- Some secondary pupils felt that state schools could do more to challenge them academically, while others complained that disruption in class sometimes hindered their learning.

- Primary schools were felt to offer good levels of support for children with special educational needs (SEN), although this relied on communication between parents and schools regarding the needs of individual pupils.

- State secondary schools were reported to offer particularly good levels of support for SEN pupils, although it was felt that private schools had a considerable way to go in this regard.

- Supporting pupils and families for whom English is spoken as an additional language (EAL) was recognised as a particular challenge in Jersey, both within primary and secondary education – and while schools appear do being doing well to support pupils, it was felt that parents may require additional support.

- Both primary and secondary pupils felt confident in their futures, although teachers appeared to be more concerned that barriers may stand in the way of some pupils achieving their goals.

- Parents held very high aspirations towards their children's education – although, while the majority hoped their children would attend university, many were also concerned about the financial burden involved.

- Pupils also had high aspirations and many expressed a desire to exceed the level of education received by their parents.

Introduction

This chapter explores the perceived well-being of pupils within Jersey's primary and secondary schools. Two particular aspects of well-being are considered here. Firstly, well-being is explored in terms of pupils' attitudes towards their schools, their learning, and their

aspirations towards the future. Secondly, the well-being of particular groups of pupils is also considered, with respect to children with special education needs (SEN) and children for whom English is spoken as an additional language (EAL). This chapter therefore address general questions of pupils' satisfaction with their education, alongside the more specific question of how Jersey's schools are ensuring the inclusion of pupils who may face particular challenges in their learning.

Satisfaction

Primary education

The results discussed in the previous two chapters suggest that primary school pupils and their parents are generally satisfied with the amount of information received from schools and with their ability to exercise choice within the school system. This section explores some additional insights into more general levels of satisfaction with the education and experience of attending primary schools in Jersey.

Despite the limitations imposed by the catchment area system, we found that parents with children in public primary schools generally appeared to be happy with the education their children are getting, as typified by the following quotations:

> *The school here has been absolutely first class in terms of assistance with his weak areas. [Parent on Year 6 boy]*

> *I am happy because they give me lots of education and teach me how to do sports. [Year 6 pupil]*

Levels of general satisfaction with the primary schools attended as discussed by our interviewees appeared to be high.

Pupils were particularly keen to reflect on the extra-curricular activities which they were involved in when discussing their feelings towards primary school:

> *I think these opportunities help me to make more friends and don't be shy. [Year 6 pupil]*

> *I made some friends there, and with swimming I got a bit scared, I didn't know I was in the right place and then the teacher came and introduced me to the rest. I made two friends and I started to learn a bit more and being more confident. [Year 6 pupil]*

> *I think because I am a scout I think that I am able to do a lot of things that a lot of people of my age wouldn't be able to do. [Year 6 pupil]*

> *I am an island player: our team won the league [and] we were presented with the trophy. I've met some great friends through my sports. I am going to Guernsey very soon, [so it] couldn't be better. [Year 6 pupil]*

Primary school pupils therefore appeared to derive particular enjoyment from these sorts of activities and their satisfaction with school was often discussed in the context of these.

Transition to secondary school

The transition between primary and secondary school can be a particular source of stress and anxiety for many pupils. Some of the pupils interviewed discussed these concerns, although many also emphasised that these worries faded over time:

> *I was worried more than anything as I didn't know anybody, I only knew a couple of people from my school coming to [school name]. I was happy to be here, but I didn't know anyone, so it was a bit worrying. [Year 9 student]*

> *I was excited to come to a new school. I was also a bit worried but then got used to it. [Year 9 student]*

More worryingly, several Year 6 pupils held concerns that bullying would be a greater problem in secondary schools:

> *I am kind of worried about the bullies. When I was a bit younger, there were lots of rumours that there were lots of bullies in the public school. [Year 6 pupil]*

Some pupils discussed their anxieties over the transition to secondary school in terms of the differences between non-fee paying and fee-paying schools, especially over the fact that private schools in Jersey are single-sex:

> *I think it also affects relationships like having a boyfriend or a girlfriend if you go to a private school. [Year 6 pupil]*

This range of quotes therefore reveals how students have complex and diverse concerns regarding the transition between primary and secondary school.

Most schools have programmes in place through which secondary schools have regular contact with the primary pupils in Year 6. Some secondary schools, for example, host visits for groups of pupils from their catchment primary schools and at least one secondary school offers a summer school to help children settle in. Several secondary schools have also recently moved to a primary-type model for their Year 7 teaching, to provide pupils with a more familiar environment from the outset. These steps appear to help parents and pupils with transition:

We don't have to mix with older kids and it's more interesting than primary school; we learn a lot more. [Year 7 secondary student]

However, the transition to secondary also imposes practical challenges on families, as evidenced by this remark from a primary head:

In primary, parents are bringing the children to school and taking them at the end of the day, whereas in secondary they can take the bus. So I think it's a little bit tricky at secondary school and parents just hope that things will go smoothly.

These appear as welcome efforts to help prepare students for the transition and integrate them into their new schools during Year 7.

The transition to Hautlieu (at age 14) potentially poses particular challenges for pupils who have already settled into their secondary schooling. As a result, some students choose not to go to Hautlieu because they feel secure and have established friendships at their current schools:

In Year 9 he was selected for opportunity to go to Hautlieu. We came along to the school parents' evenings, information evenings and school interviews, but he made the choice to stay in [state secondary school named] because he was settled [and] everything was going well. He didn't like the prospect of ten new teachers in a new school, so we supported him with his decision. [Father of students in Year 8 and Year 11 public secondary school]

In other cases, high achieving pupils who chose to decline an offer of a place at Hautlieu were concerned that a proportion of their friendship group would leave after Year 9:

I was offered a place in Hautlieu, but I decided to stay here for the better GCSE options. All my friends have gone to Hautlieu [but] I am fully happy. I am going to miss my friends, but I know it's the right choice for my future. [Year 9 girl in a public secondary school]

The intake into Hautlieu at age 14 therefore constitutes a unique aspect of pupils attitudes towards school transitions in Jersey. On the whole, however, it appears that schools in Jersey do well to manage these transitions and our interviews did not reveal systematic concerns regarding the move to secondary school.

Secondary education

Pupils and parents were forthcoming in sharing opinions about their secondary schools. Again, the majority of interviewees appeared to be satisfied. Encouragingly, satisfaction was discussed in terms of an inclusive range of opportunities for both state and private schools:

It's a fantastic arrangement. It's a very inclusive school. Everybody has the opportunity to do everything both academically and there is every sport you can think of. We couldn't ask for anything more. [Father of Year 8 and Year 11 students in a state secondary school]

I think there is a wide range of opportunities. I find that good because it gives a chance to everyone because people have different needs and we have the opportunity to do what we want. [Year 9 boy in private secondary school]

More specifically, others discussed satisfaction in terms of the balance between extra-curricular and academic opportunities and the level of support offered in this regard:

There are quite a lot of opportunities for sports and there are also mentoring sessions to help you with your English, Maths, Science and all that. [Year 9 boy in state secondary school]

I think the academic opportunities are absolutely good and the out-of-school activities, they always get a good variety of choice. I am quite impressed. [Mother of a Year 11 student in a state secondary school]

These positive accounts were typical of a large number of responses.

However, some interviewees had specific concerns regarding issues within their schools. One recurring issue for pupils' and parents' satisfaction concerned the perception that schools were not sufficiently 'pushing' pupils to improve. This was mainly discussed in academic terms, but also in terms of behaviour:

Sometimes we could be pushed a bit more in French, and maybe Maths as well. [Year 9 boy in state secondary school]

I think they should try to push the children maybe because that's how it is back home where all subjects are compulsory. When he had to choose subjects here it was quite difficult. There were subjects like cooking, and my son is not interested in that. [Immigrant parent of a Year 11 boy]

I think they [try to] reassure us that the school is very good and mention the positive side that the school is offering you. They could also try to push you a bit more; tell us how we can improve behaviour and tell us the goals we need to achieve. [Year 9 girl in state secondary school]

Others discussed perceived problems relating to poor behaviour and disruptions in class:

If I want to achieve something, I have to work for that. I can't expect others to do it for me. But then again, like in class, if I am trying to learn something and someone else is disrupting the class, we are not going to be able to learn, so it does depend on others as well. [Student in state secondary school]

If you work hard you achieve a goal, but say, for example, a class and someone distracts [you]. They are disrupting your education and it's annoying. [Student in state secondary school]

A small number of interviewees also reflected on issues relating to bullying, these generally concerned specific manifestations of bullying such as this:

When we are at the canteen sometimes people squish you in the middle and they call you names and you can't answer back. The older kids bully us during lunch break and there is no respect for the teachers. [Immigrant Year 7 girl in state secondary school]

The interviews did not reveal systematic issues of bullying, although this was not specifically addressed data as part of this research.

Pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN)

Inclusion of SEN pupils within primary education

Typically, primary school pupils with special educational needs (SEN) attend their local catchment area schools. While some of these schools are reputed to have greater expertise than others in supporting these pupils, the impression gained from our fieldwork was that all schools are striving to improve facilities for SEN children. In addition, schools in Jersey have access to support and resources provided by the Department of Education:

Interviews with school leaders supported the impression that SEN children on Jersey are generally well-accommodated within 'mainstream' education. As one headteacher explained, the system in Jersey is geared towards providing resources with which to support SEN children in catchment schools:

Most children with SEN, if they were born in Jersey, are known to all the various agencies that help families from birth and because all the schools are given a budget, if a SEN child comes to the catchment primary school, that school will have the facilities to support those children.[Primary school headteacher]

As a result, parents should not need to alter their primary school choices for children with SEN. This was reiterated by another headteacher, who described the inclusive approach which their primary school adopted in response to pupil's individual needs:

Anybody reading our website would see we are an all-inclusive school. We don't give specific information such as 'if your child has this, then you can access that' because I don't think that making that public is the right thing to do because it is an individual's needs. It's only when they come in that we can have a conversation. [Primary school headteacher]

In the eyes of school leaders, at least, primary schools were well-adapted towards the inclusion of children with SEN, as a result of the support available from the Education Department.

This approach appeared to constitute a welcome improvement on the ways in which SEN children were supported in the past. Referring to the situation some years ago, one SEN co-ordinator described how schools had failed to take responsibility for SEN pupils in the past:

> *Well, I'm the special needs coordinator; I'll come and fix whatever problems you've got. Give me your children. I will sort them and then you can have them back.*

Today, the inclusion of SEN pupils in primary schools was perceived in both positive and 'matter of fact' terms:

> *A girl in my class gets extra help because she struggles a little bit and if they wouldn't get this help I think that at the end of Year 6 that would be really hard. [Year 6 girl]*

From our interviews, we also gained the impression that parents of SEN pupils were satisfied with the provisions put in place within their catchment or public schools:

> *I talked to the teacher and he was very nice and said he would keep an eye and that he saw my son was a happy child in the classroom. [Mother of a SEN Year 6 boy]*

> *My children get a lot of support. They have a severe medical condition and they are allowed to arrive at school later and are given the required medication by school staff during school hours. [Immigrant mother of SEN children in Year 2 and (now) Year 7]*

School leaders also suggested that feedback from parents was positive:

> *Feedback from parents is good […] and they tend to come back with a very positive picture. We don't get lots of negatives. For the children who are in our resource provision for autism, they are making their decisions based on what parents and professionals agree [is] best for them. [Primary school headteacher]*

From these interviews, at least, we did not get the impression that there were any systemic problems in the provision of learning support for SEN pupils, whether encountered by teachers, parents or pupils themselves.

However, our interviews also suggested that some challenges remained in terms of meeting the needs of SEN pupils in Jersey. For instance, one issue concerned whether and how such needs were identified, as one parent described:

> *I said it looks a bit like dyslexia, but they dismissed that, saying that it was more of an attitude problem, saying he was just badly behaved. I mentioned again to the teacher that he might have dyslexia and she told me that if he had dyslexia she wouldn't know*

what to do because she's never had a child with dyslexia. We felt that the headteacher was being very defensive because she didn't want to be criticised and we were very upset of the situation. [Mother of a Year 3 pupil]

This issue appeared as a source of some contention. On the one hand, some school leaders felt that the system relied on parents to inform schools of their child's special needs:

We have a very robust process, but it depends on the parent providing us with the information, and we do get some instances with parents who for whatever reason withhold information. [Education policy maker]

On the other hand, others felt that it was the responsibility of the school

If the child has SEN, it is us that identify it and we will then activate the educational psychologist, the occupational therapist, the speech and language team; all those that can help because English is not their first language. So more often than not, it is the school that instigates everything. [Primary school headteacher]

In some instances, parents made the decision to seek alternatives for SEN children outside of the state primary school system:

The educational psychologist said that there are two private schools on the island that have small classes and have special needs teachers who are very experienced. So it was recommended to us as a very caring environment.

It is not surprising that experiences of and responses to SEN education vary between families. Overall, our interviews did not reveal any systematic issues in SEN support within Jersey's primary schools.

Inclusion of SEN pupils within secondary education

Parents and teachers also discussed their experiences of how SEN pupils were supported within Jersey's secondary schools. On the whole, attitudes towards SEN support within non-fee paying (state) schools were positive:

They do have support here because they put Teaching Assistants with the children to help them to pick up the language they are missing. They put the time and effort into it. [Mother of a Year 7 student in a state secondary school]

My son is in smaller groups, and the lessons are differentiated for that level. There is a key worker in there as well, not necessarily for him, but they also have TA's as well to support. I'd say his needs are more met than for the more academic children. You know, it's very balanced, but because we have a high percentage of SEN. [Mother of a Year 7 student in a state secondary school]

This view was also re-iterated by those involved in teaching secondary pupils:

> *I think we are slightly more weighted towards SEN. It's hard for me because I work here in SEN, but when by daughter was here they go from the starting point to add value to the students, which is very good for those who are more needy. [Parent and teaching assistant in a state secondary school]*

The impression was therefore that secondary schools were geared towards the support of SEN pupils.

However, one key theme to have emerged from the interviews was the perception that fee-paying schools did not provide equivalent levels of SEN support:

> *I don't know what [private schools] are supporting, but I'd imagine it's more high-functioning children. I've seen a lot of students who have siblings who are in private schools and those who are 'more needy' have come to us or to other state schools, so that backs up my theory that they are not supported as well. [Mother of a Year 9 student in a state secondary school]*

In some cases, parents went as far as to suggest that selective fee-paying schools would not accept SEN pupils:

> *There is a big difference between the private sector and state schools. The private sector would not take people in with special educational needs, [though] maybe they would take with specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia. [Father of a Year 7 SEN student in a state secondary school]*

This was reiterated – albeit in less strong terms – by some of the teachers interviewed from the private sector, although it was argued that provisions for SEN support were improving:

> *We didn't have the support. There is no doubt in my mind that we had SEN children for a while, but we hadn't really had a proper support programme in place. We are really only beginning to build up support networks for children for SEN and we are about to appoint two teaching assistants to work with the SENCO. The SEN department will begin to take-off in the next two years. I think that at the moment there is a feeling that we don't offer much learning support [and] parents are beginning to understand that the school needs to provide for pupils with SEN. [Private school headteacher]*

While the perceived lack of support in fee-paying schools constitutes a cause for concern, it is encouraging that schools appear to be aware of the need to improve in this regard and measures to better accommodate SEN pupils appear to be being put in place.

It was also found that some parents of SEN children did not have a positive view in relation to their children's transition to secondary school. As a mothers of a child with learning disabilities explained:

> *My son wants to be with three specific pupils when he moves, but they haven't asked me who he wants to be with. These are the things I would think they would come to me and say: "What shall we do; let's do this". They said they would, but they said that last term as well. I'm at the end of this term and still waiting to find out what they are going to do. I just got the letter last week saying he has a place, so perhaps now they will do something, but there is only one term left. [Mother of a Year 6 SEN pupil]*

Another parent warned that a lack of easily available information constituted a potential problem for those who were less forthcoming in asking for support:

> *I often find that as a parent you need to find out things for yourself. It would be really lovely if someone came and said 'this is what you need to do' and as a parent with a child with special needs I think that would be very supportive and very helpful. But nobody tells you that you will be entitled to these things that you are entitled to. I have no hesitation in picking up the phone and ask if I've got a query, but I know that not everybody has that ability. [Father of a Year 7 SEN student]*

These comments broadly echo the view from primary schools that the onus is often placed on parents to inform schools and request that support be put in place for SEN pupils. More broadly, however, SEN provisions within Jersey's secondary schools were perceived positively, especially in terms of the additional staffing available. The parents we interviewed appeared to value the fact that the needs of SEN children were accommodated within 'mainstream' non-fee paying education.

Pupils for whom English is spoken as an Additional Language (EAL)

This section considers the support provided for pupils for whom English is an additional language (EAL). With an average of between 600 and 1,000 new migrants arriving in Jersey annually over the past decade – and with nearly 20 per cent of Jersey's population now born in countries in which English is not the first language – the island's schools cater for a number of pupils for whom English is not their first language.

Inclusion of EAL pupils within primary education

School leaders and teachers generally argued that all primary schools did their best to ensure support and inclusion for their EAL pupils:

> *I think all schools have the same facilities and opportunities for children with EAL. We all have access to the speech and language group, which is based at [state primary school named], but we can ring up and say we have a child here we need help with... Every school has equal opportunities. [Primary school headteacher]*

However, school staff also acknowledged that they faced challenges in providing support for EAL pupils, with a translated materials or multi-lingual staff constituting a main barrier:

> *Not everything that gets out of the school is translated into other languages, which is unfortunate really. [Primary headteacher]*

> *I think the [thing] that could be stronger is the issue with the additional language; there could be perhaps more information with that. I think written communication is the biggest challenge; I don't have Portuguese- or Polish-speaking staff. [Primary headteacher]*

Worryingly, in one teacher's view, a lack of provision for the range of languages spoken by pupils meant that other children (who speak the same languages) constituted the main source of support for EAL pupils:

> *There is not enough support for foreign languages, because there are [many] children here with different language needs and there is no support, other than other children from the same place. [Primary teaching assistant]*

It was therefore very apparent that primary schools were aware of the challenges posed by educating EAL pupils. While some teachers/schools argued that there was an equality of support available, others clearly felt that this was not the case.

Despite these challenges, parents of EAL pupils who were interviewed generally reported that schools were doing a good job in supporting their children's learning needs:

> *The school here has been absolutely first class in terms of assistance with his weak areas. He was aware of some of the problems and he had the opportunity to discuss the situation with other children who were already there and to a degree he did participate but he was pointed in the right direction. [Immigrant parent of a Year 6 boy]*

> *My son gets extra support for literacy. Before, what he used to write didn't make sense and now it makes sense. [Immigrant mother of a Year 6 boy]*

Interviews with EAL families did not, therefore, appear to suggest that their children's linguistic needs constituted a major hindrance in their primary schooling, due to the support offered by schools (despite the fact that teachers themselves appeared to feel that they were struggling in this regard).

However, for EAL families themselves perceived variations in the ethnic and/or linguistic mix of Jersey's schools also constituted an important driver for their school choices:

> *I knew there was a variety of [ethnic] backgrounds and I thought it would be good for him. [Parent of a Year 6 pupil]*

> *It worked out well; he settled in school fairly well probably because of the ethnic mix here. [Parent of a Year 6 pupil]*

The catchment area system has some potential to hinder parents' ability to choose whether their child can go to a school with a reputation for 'ethnic mix'. Some families therefore sought to avoid sending their children to catchment schools:

> *My children didn't go their catchment primary, so you do have the opportunities [for choice]. [Mother of pupils now in Years 9 and 10]*

If a parent does with to make a case for their child to go elsewhere, they can make an appeal to the Department of Education, so there is some flexibility within the catchment area system. Although this was not always perceived to be an easy process, interviewees did indicate that the Department generally endeavoured to meet their needs:

> *Before coming back from [Portugal] I contacted the Education Department. My son wanted to return to the same school and although they said they couldn't be certain, the person in charge assured me that my son's wishes would be at the forefront of the decision, and as soon as I came back they said 'fine'. [Mother of a SEN Year 6 pupil]*

Primary teachers also described taking measures to support parents in this appeals process:

> *We try to be supportive as much as we can. I've even gone to an appeal meeting with a parent who didn't feel secure putting their points across. It was a parent whose literacy skills were particularly poor and they were a bit anxious going to a panel.*

Therefore, while there was no clear evidence that EAL pupils were disadvantaged within the primary school system, it does appear that there are challenges faced both by schools (in terms of resources and expertise) and by parents (in terms of choice) when it comes to meeting the needs of children for whom English is not their first language.

A troubling additional challenge faced by state primary schools comes from perceptions within the wider school community with respect to inclusion, as a primary headteacher explained:

> *To get inclusion going is quite a battle. Not all parents have an inclusive attitude and I'd say it's probably taken around five years to get the whole community to understand so that parents are accepting of all the differences in our school. So there are a lot of things that we do which are about breaking down barriers and making sure nobody feels left out.*

On the one hand, this constitutes an important reminder of the fact that issues faced in schools can sometimes reflect problematic attitudes or conflicts within the wider community.

Inclusion of EAL pupils within secondary education

In contrast to primary education, our interviewees gave the impression that the inclusion of EAL pupils posed a greater challenge within secondary schools. On the one hand, schools themselves were perceived as doing well to provide information and support for EAL pupils and parents:

> *On induction day, if you are from a different background, the EAL teacher will be here. We have interpreters on site, [so] there is no reason why there is left anything unexplained. They will get everything in the letters in both English and Portuguese or Polish. So, on induction days, there is a big effort for EAL staff to have a visible presence. [Father of Year 8 and Year 11 students in a state secondary]*

Schools also appeared to be taking further steps to include non-native English speakers:

> *We want to introduce a 'welcome pack' in Portuguese, and maybe in Polish, with specific information about how the school works because the system is different from where they come from. [Teaching assistant in a state secondary school]*

However, the fact that many EAL pupils arriving in Jersey enter secondary schools at a later stage in their education creates a need for more support:

> *I'd like to have more dedicated support, particularly for youngsters who arrived on island who don't have English at all, and that makes it very difficult to access the curriculum. We have some sort of intensive work and I'd like to see that the EAL students have [greater] access to support than they have now, but we are not able to put in as much support as we'd like because the EAL team in Jersey is very small and spread across secondary [and] primary; across all sectors. [State secondary school headteacher]*

The pressures of providing EAL support within secondary schools therefore appeared to be creating the need for more support that is currently available within Jersey's education system.

A second but related issue to have emerged from our interviews with pupils concerned the fact that parents of EAL children sometimes struggled to provide support with homework:

> *My parents can't help me because they are not English so they don't know [the language or the system. [Year 9 EAL pupil student in state secondary school]*

> *If you need help with English, it's quite hard if your parents don't know English. [Year 7 EAL pupil student in state secondary school]*

It would be better if they are better educated because sometimes they talk something different at school, and when it comes to help us they don't really know what to do. [Year 9 EAL pupil student in state secondary school]

A similar issue was discussed in terms of parents' ability to engage with their children's schools:

If they don't speak English like my parents, if there is a letter home and they don't really know what [it's about], you have to explain everything. [Immigrant Year 9 student in state secondary school]

Years 7's have started issuing questionnaires to evaluate parents' meetings, but it doesn't differentiate the English parents from the Portuguese parents. [Teaching assistant in a state secondary school]

These insights suggest that schools should also consider the need to support parents of EAL pupils and work to ensure an equal level of access to help with homework.

Lastly, several respondents expressed concerns over the impact of negative or discriminatory attitudes towards inclusion within the broader community of Jersey – regardless of the work being done in schools to ensure the inclusion of EAL pupils:

Our minority children feel proud of the Jersey community and they are very proud of their home community, but sometimes there are [feelings] of 'not feeling an accepted part of the Jersey community'. [State primary school headteacher]

To get inclusion going is quite a battle. Not all parents have an inclusive attitude and I'd say it's probably taken around five years to get the whole community to understand so that parents are accepting of all the differences in our school. [State primary school headteacher]

It is therefore important to remember questions of inclusion for EAL pupils and children from different backgrounds cannot be considered outside of the context of the wider communities in which schools operate.

The Future

The future for primary pupils

Generally, primary students felt that they were in control of their futures[35]. They found it easy to access advice and guidance on their future education (74%), the operation of their schools (84%), their social lives (70%) and their after-school activities (69%). However, students also

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[35] $x = 3.9$, SD = 1.3

saw a number of constraints in their futures (Figure 22). For them, finding a quiet place to study was a concern (40%), as was staying motivated (36%), and the lack of information on offer (29%). Around a quarter of pupils (24%) believed that their ideas for the future conflicted with those of their parents, and some also believed they conflicted with those of their teachers (15%) and friends (20%). Pupils reported that changes in their hopes and ambitions where most likely to be in response to new ideas (56%), getting better grades than expected (36%), or the desire to keep their parents happy (32%).

Figure 22: Primary pupils' perceived constraints in their futures
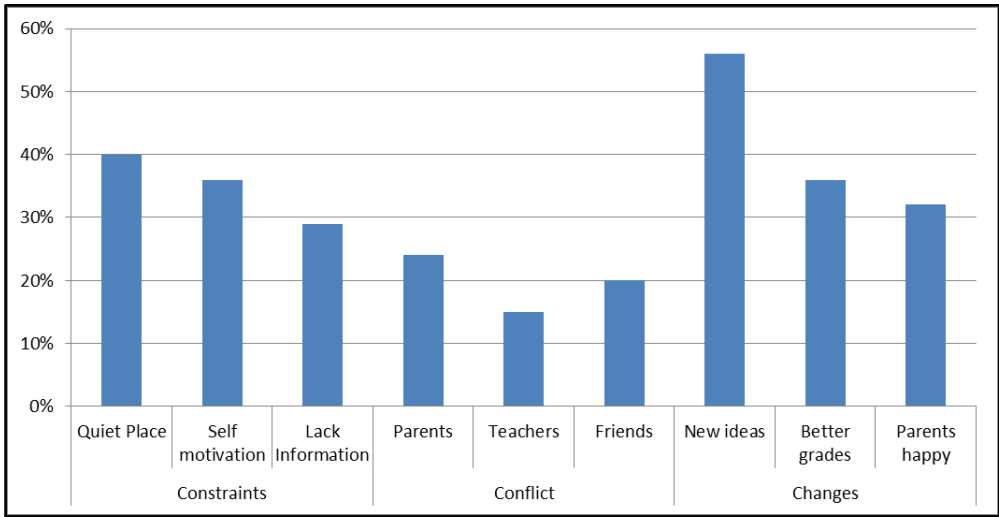
The majority of students said they were not afraid to share their hopes and ambitions and they were quite confident they would achieve them (Figure 23.1 and 23.2).

**Figure 23.1: Primary pupils' fear of discussing future**
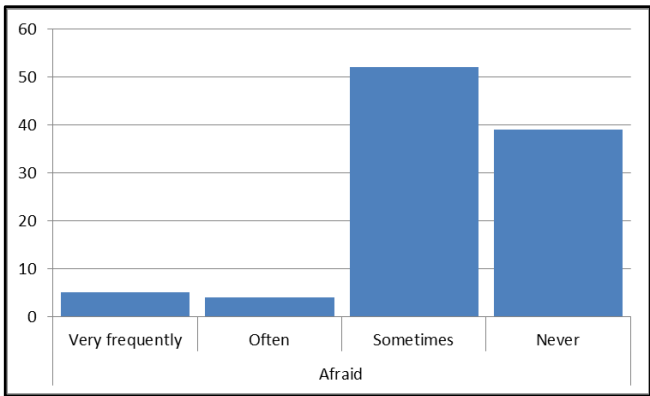
**23.2: Primary pupils' confidence in future**
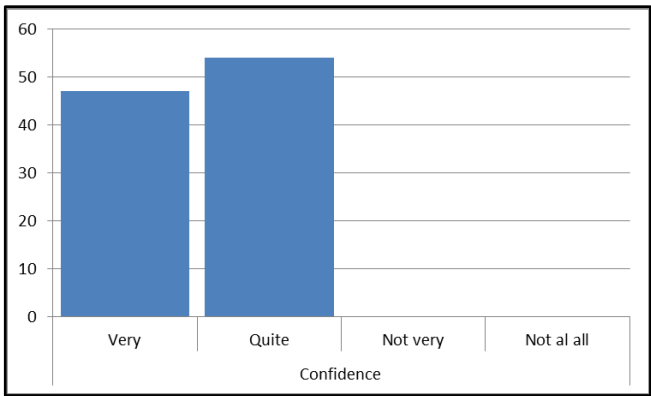
Looking to the future, only a small proportion parents reported that there were obstacles making it difficult for their children to achieve their hopes and ambitions. They suggested their children's motivation (36%), their own lack of knowledge (26%) and a lack of understanding about what a school can offer (31%) to be the greatest hurdles. Finally, most parents felt that their children were not afraid to share their hopes and ambitions with others, and were quite confident they would achieve them (Figure 24.1 & 24.2).

Figure 24.1: Primary pupils' fear of discussing future (parents' perception)
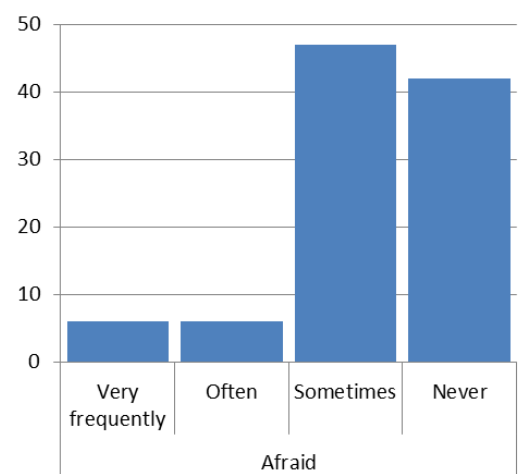
24.2: Primary pupils' confidence in future (parents' perception)
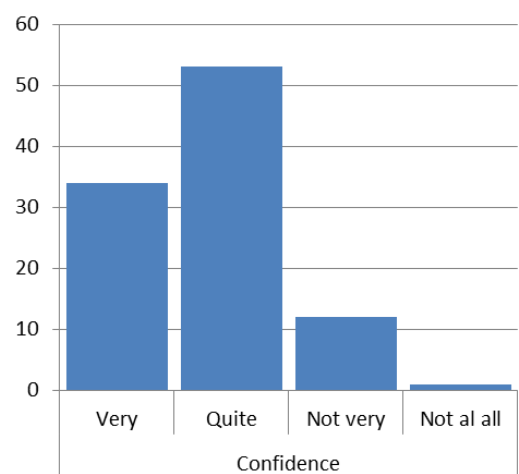
Primary teachers feel that a variety of issues would make it difficult for students to reach their goals (

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Figure 25). More than three quarters (78%) felt that support from parents was a problem. Pupils' motivation (44%) and finding quiet places to study (33%) were also seen as hindrances. Worryingly, the highest proportion (91%) of teachers reported receiving lower-than-expected grades to be a constraint on pupils' futures. A far lower proportion (55%) reported that better-than-expected grades may in turn broaden pupils' future horizons. Teachers strongly believed that pupils had adequate opportunity to talk to teachers[36], family[37] and peers[38] about their future. They also agreed that pupils were not afraid to discuss their future and were confident in achieve their goals (see Figure 26.1 and 26.2).
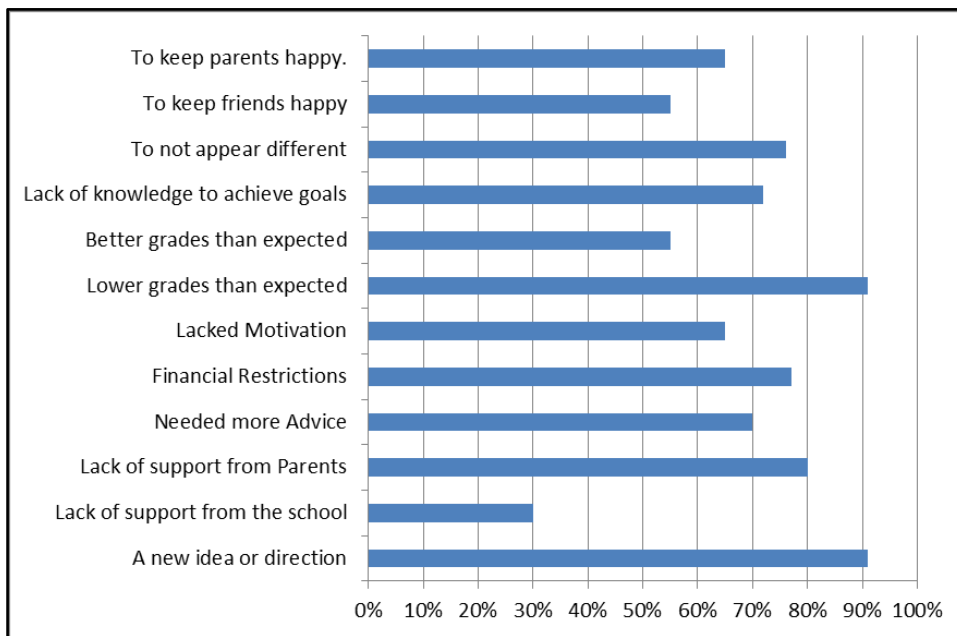
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[36] $x = 4.2$, SD = 0.9
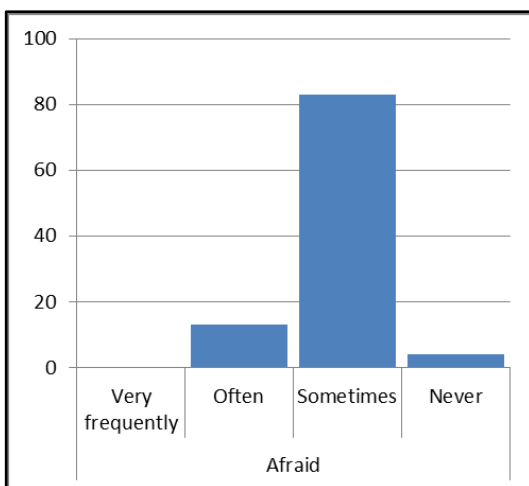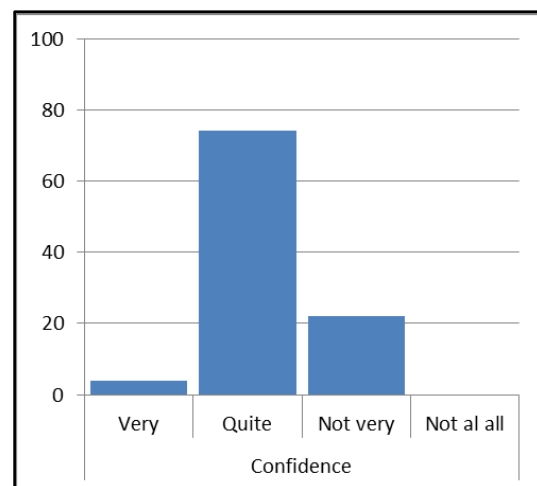
[37] $x = 3.9$, SD = 0.8

[38] $x = 4.0$, SD = 0.7

Figure 25: Teachers' perceived constraints on primary pupils' futures

**Figure 26.1: Primary pupils' fear of discussing future (teachers' perception)**

**26.2: Primary confidence in future (teachers' perception)**

The future for secondary pupils

Secondary pupils also generally held positive feeling towards their futures. Finding a quiet place to study was the most commonly reported issue for secondary pupils (40%). Pupils also acknowledged that personal motivation (50%) had a strong influence on their future, with only a small proportion expressing concerns that their ambitions might conflict with those of their parents' (32%), teachers' (20%), or friends' (19%). On a positive note, the majority of students said they were not afraid to share their hopes and ambitions, and were quite confident of achieving them (see Figure 27.1 and 27.2).

**Figure 27.1: Secondary pupils' fear of discussing future**
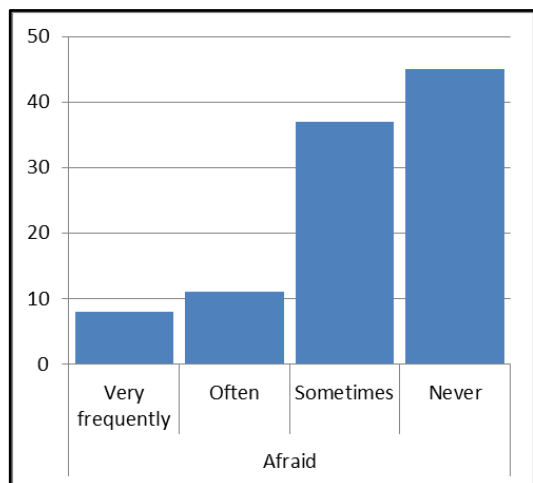
**27.2: Secondary pupils' confidence in future**
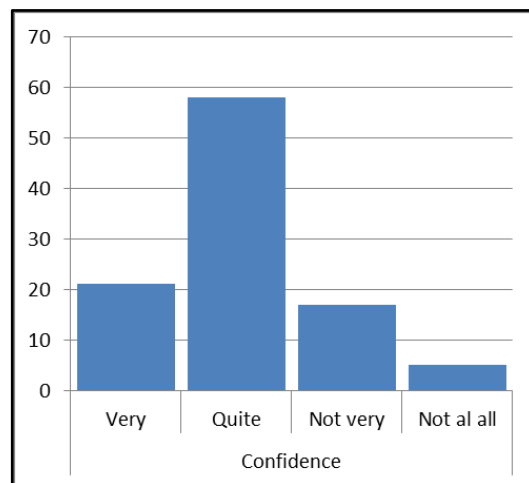
Parents felt that their children had reasonable opportunities to talk with teachers about their futures[39], but were more confident in their ability to talk with family members[40], and other young people[41]. There are few obstacles that they believe will make it difficult for children to achieve their ambitions, although more than a quarter (27%) of parents interestingly singled out their own ambition as an obstacle. Most believed their children were not afraid to talk about their future and also had in their children's futures (see Figure 28.1 and 28.2).

Figure 28.1: Secondary Pupils' fear of discussing future (parents' perception)
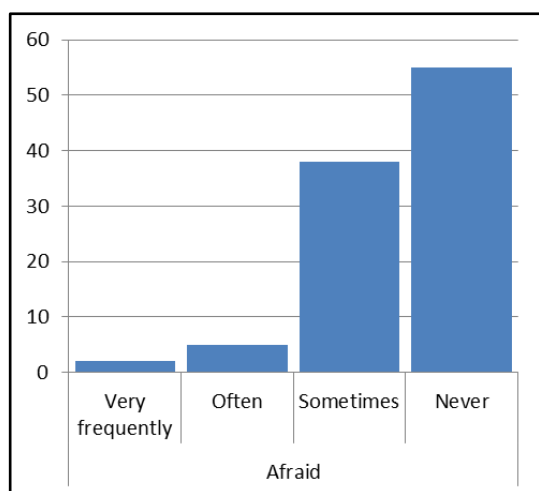
**28.2: Secondary pupils' confidence in future (parents' perceptions)**

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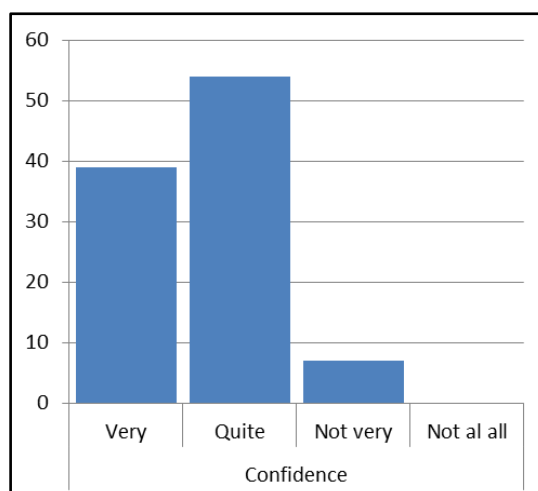
[39] $x = 3.6$, SD = 1.2

[40] $x = 4.7$, SD = 0.8

[41] $x = 4.4$, SD = 1.1

Teachers reported that the obstacles on students achieving their ambitions included a lack of support from parents (79%), motivation (70%), and pupils' own ability (49%). Furthermore, they felt that students' ideas for their future conflicts often with their parents (61%) and that students change their ideas and aspirations frequently for a variety of reasons (see Figure 29).

Figure 29: Secondary teachers' perceptions of constraints on pupils' futures
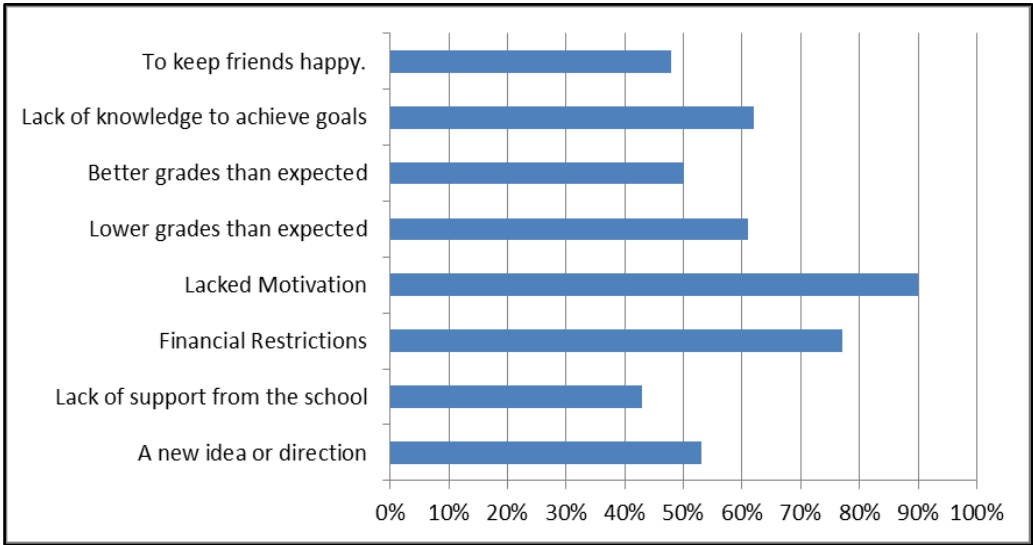

Finally, teachers reported that students were confident in discussing and achieving their ambitions for the future, although they were more cautious in their optimism than were pupils and parents in this regard (see Figure 30.1 and 30.2).

Figure 30.1: Secondary Pupils' fear of discussing future (teachers' perception)
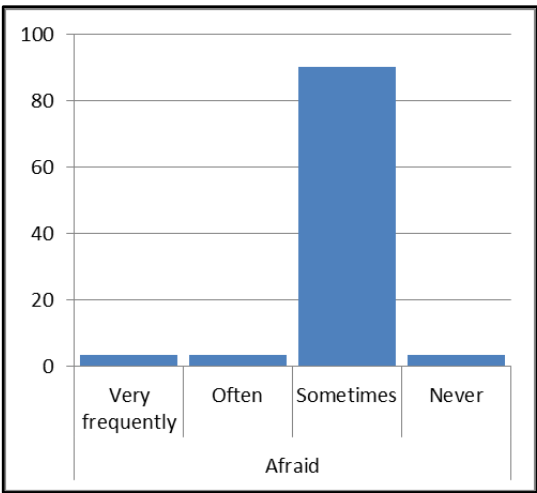
30.2: Secondary Pupils' confidence in future (teachers' perception)
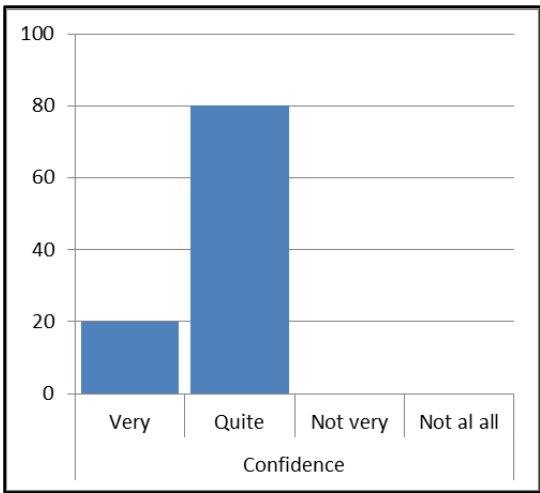
Aspirations and goals

Interviews with parents reveal that they understandably have aspirations for their children's futures, which also take into account their needs and talents. Parents generally held high expectations for their children and acknowledged the importance of education in helping them achieve these goals:

> *... his father is a window cleaner. My son says that he would like to be like his father and I say no! You need to be more than that and earn more money, maybe work in a bank. [Immigrant mother of a Year 6 pupil]*

> *I would like him to have a good education and complete the education cycle, but from my own experience, I know that when I was at school I didn't know what to do, but I tell him to make the most of his education so he can be prepared because he is intelligent. [Immigrant mother of a Year 6 pupil]*

More specifically, many parents (including 87% of those surveyed) expressed a desire for their children to attend university:

> *I've been educated to A-Level standard, my husband has done his degree so we are quite academic. So I'd prefer that my [children] go to university and reach their full potential. [Mother of a Year 9 student]*

However, some parents also reflected on the challenges associated with funding their children's higher education when discussing their ambitious for university:

> *Ideally, I'd like her to go to university. My older two kids went to Hautlieu. Unfortunately, I don't think I will be able to afford to send them to university, but if I could it would be fantastic. [Mother of a Year 7 student]*

> *I would like them to have as much as we can possibly afford. If they want to go to university; I'd love them to go to university. [Mother of Year 8 and Year 9 students]*

Unsurprisingly, therefore, parents held high expectations and these were often framed in terms of children exceeding their parents' own level of educational attainment. However, the cost of further education remained as a concern for parents.

Children also appeared to be equally aware of their parents' expectations:

> *My parents expect me to do a bit better than them because they dropped out of school at their GSCE, so they expect me to go on and do A-Levels and then do something reasonable well. [Year 9 boy in private secondary school]*

This was sometimes perceived in terms of being 'pushed' to achieve in school, although this was not necessarily discussed by children in negative terms:

My mum especially pushes me so much because she wants me to be the best I can. I want to be a vet and she doesn't really mind so I am happy that she pushes me, but it's annoying sometimes. [Year 7 girl in state secondary school]

Some of the pupils we interviewed also expressed a desire to avoid what they perceived to be challenging or negative aspects of their parents working lives:

My mum and dad left school really early to work. They say that I shouldn't do what they did. They said I should study and stay at school and choose the best subjects for me. [Immigrant Year 9 boy in state secondary school]

I would mind doing my mum's job because her job is really stressing. She works at [store name] and sometimes people upset my mum because she doesn't know a lot of English and she gets really sad. [Immigrant Year 6 girl]

While others of the pupils descried wanting to emulate successful parents or relatives:

My dad is quite clever. He is a teacher and I would like to be quite similar to him in that I teach, but I want to go one step better: I want to be a professor and a scientist who makes stuff like world famous discoveries and that depends on my education. [Year 6 boy]

My auntie wants me to be an architect because she is one so she inspired me. She even let me go at her workplace to see one of the buildings she was designing. [Immigrant Year 6 boy]

These quotes provide an insight into the various ways in which pupils framed their own desires for the future, alongside the expectations or experiences of their parents.

Parents also described their desires to do everything possible to support their children's education. However, some parents discussed the difficulties they experienced in helping with homework in this regard:

I struggle quite a lot. They come home with their homework and I just look at it and think what on earth this is? Because it's totally different from when I was at school. [Mother of a Year 11 student in a state secondary school]

There are a lot of things that have changed. I think now parents need to be IT literate. If you are not literate as a parent it's quite difficult to grasp how they do it. Parents need to be pretty well-read and numerate and on board with computers. [Father of Year 8 and Year 11 students in state secondary school]

I think parents do need re-educating in some parts. I think Maths is the massive thing because the way we learned Maths is not the way they learn Maths [today]. I think it's hard to be a parent. I haven't been in education for a long time. [Mother of Year 8 and Year 9 students in state secondary school]

These additional insights suggest that parents face particular challenges in terms of supporting aspects of their children's learning which differed from their own knowledge or experience of school subjects (especially in maths and IT).

Conclusions: Supporting pupils' wellbeing

This chapter has considered the wellbeing of children in Jersey's schools, from the perspective of pupils, parents and teachers. Wellbeing was firstly explored in terms of general satisfaction with schooling and the interviews suggested that both parents and pupils were broadly satisfied with their experiences of primary and secondary schools. In particular, schools were felt to offer a supportive environment for children's learning, coupled with a good range of activities. However, some secondary pupils felt that non-fee paying schools needed to do more to challenge them academically and several also complained that disruptions in class sometimes hindered their learning. On the other hand, it was encouraging that only a very small number of pupils discussed incidents of bullying in their interviews. Although the overall picture was one of general satisfaction, the transition between primary and secondary school constituted a source of anxiety for some pupils. Many primary and secondary schools do have schemes in place which support these transitions and this was reflected in the fact that pupils' fears about secondary schools were dispelled over time.

This chapter also considered the specific question of inclusion for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) and pupils for whom English was spoken as an additional language. Primary schools were felt to offer good levels of support for children with special educational needs (SEN), although this appeared to rely on parents communicating with schools regarding the needs of their children. State secondary schools were reported to offer particularly good levels of support for SEN pupils, through the work of teaching assistants and a range of measures tailored to the needs of particular learners. Overall, Jersey's state schools appeared to be strongly committed to the principle of inclusion within mainstream education of pupils with a wide range of SENs. In contrast, it was recognised that private schools had a considerable way to go in this regard, although school staff did describe new measures being put into place. Secondly, the need to support a large and growing number of EAL pupils was widely recognised as a challenge for Jersey's schools. Both primary and secondary schools did appear to be doing well in this regard, through specialist teaching and the use of translators/translated materials for parents. However, EAL pupils felt that many parents still struggled to engage with their schools or to assist with homework. More could therefore be done to support families with English skills or through translated materials.

Lastly, this chapter explore perceptions towards the future of pupils in Jersey's schools, both from the perspective of pupils, parents, and teachers. Primary and secondary pupils appeared

to be confident in their futures, as did their parents, and the survey responses did not reveal any systemic barriers that were perceived to hinder young people in achieving their goals. This picture was generally supported by teachers, although secondary teachers in particular did appear to be more concerned that barriers of motivation or academic ability may stand in the way of some pupils achieving their goals. Understandably, parents held very high aspirations towards their children's education. The vast majority hoped their children would attend university, although some were also concerned about the financial burden involved in further education. Pupils also recognised their parents' high expectations and many expressed aspirations to exceed the educational and employment opportunities enjoyed by their parents.

APPENDICES

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Summary of Questionnaire Findings

Questionnaires	Primary			Secondary		
	Students	Staff	Parents	Students	Staff	Parents
	134	34	103	647	41	184
Main Types of Information (decreasing order of importance)	Letters; Leaflets; Information packs	Letters; Leaflets; Information packs	Letters; Leaflets; Information packs	Information Packs; Leaflets; Letters	Leaflets; Letters; Information Packs	Leaflets; Information Packs; Letters
Main sources of information for School Choice (decreasing order of importance)	Parents; Primary teachers; Brothers/Sister	Primary School; Friends	Primary Schools; Neighbours; Secondary School	Primary Schools; Parents; Secondary Schools	Primary Schools; Secondary Schools; Neighbours / friends	Primary Schools; Secondary Schools; Neighbours/Friends
Main sources of information for Subject Choice (decreasing order of importance)				Secondary Schools; Primary Schools; Parents	Secondary Schools	Secondary Schools; Primary Schools; Own Children
Main sources of information for Activity Choice (decreasing order of importance)	Parents; primary teachers; Friends	Primary School; Friends; Parents	Primary Schools; Neighbours; Own children	Secondary Schools; Primary Schools; Parents	Secondary Schools; Brothers/Sisters	Secondary Schools; Own Children; Primary Schools
Important person for School Choice (decreasing order of importance)	Parents	Parents; Gov. Agencies; teachers	Own children; Gov. Agencies; Teachers	Parents; Teachers	Parents; Teachers; Gov. Agencies	Own Children; teachers; Extended Family; Gov. Agencies
Important person for Subject Choice (decreasing order of importance)				Parents; Teachers	Teachers; Parents	teachers; Own Children
Important person for Activity Choice (decreasing order of importance)	Parents	Parents; Friends; Teachers	Own children; Teachers	Parents; Teachers; Friends	Parents; Teachers	own Children; Teachers
Constraints	Quiet place to study; Students' Motivation; Lack of information	Lack of support from parents; Parents knowledge; Students' Motivation; Quiet place to study	Students' Motivation; Parents knowledge; Lack of information	Quiet place to study; Students' Motivation	Lack of support from parents; Students' Motivation; Own Ability	Students' Motivation
Causes of change in direction	Change of ideas; Getting better grades than expected; keeping parents happy	Change of ideas; Lower grades than expected		Change of ideas	Lacked motivation; Finances; Lower grades than expected	Change of ideas; Needed more advice