States of Guernsey

Media Release

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Children living in Herm to be educated in Guernsey during trial year

Primary-school aged children living in Herm will travel to attend school in Guernsey from September 2023 so that they are afforded the same educational opportunities as their Guernsey peers, to support their social integration and help prepare them for the transition to secondary school.

There are currently four children being educated in Herm, across three year groups, and meetings were held with their parents and the management of Herm Island today to explain the Committee for Education, Sport & Culture's decision, which aligns to the Education Strategy and the advice from senior educationalists about what is in the best interests of the children's education.

During a time of financial prudence, an added benefit of the Committee's decision is an annual saving of between £60,000 to £85,000 - though this has not been the primary factor in the decision-making process.

The Committee will trial the new arrangements for one academic year to inform the longer-term future delivery of education for Herm children.

Nick Hynes, Director of Education, said:

> 'I want to take this opportunity to express my thanks to Mary Carey, who has dedicated almost two decades to teaching children who live in Herm and has done a remarkable job in that time. We have discussed this decision at length with Mary and it's clear that it is very challenging to teach extremely small groups of children of mixed ages within the primary phase, particularly when there are fewer than five children at different ages and different stages of development. From September, children living in Herm will have the opportunity to attend Vauvert Primary School, which has already been the Guernsey link school for them, full-time rather than travelling to the school for just one day a week as they do currently. We are committed to working with parents, Herm's management and staff at the school to ensure the transition to this new model of educating children living in Herm goes smoothly and they are supported to achieve the very best outcomes possible.'

Deputy Andrea Dudley-Owen, President of the Committee for Education, Sport & Culture, said:

‘The best interests of the children are at the heart of every education-related decision the Committee makes and this is the key driver for this decision. Educating a range of year groups in one small class in Herm, means that we’re not delivering for the children against a core element of our Education Strategy, which is to ensure that our curriculum at all phases reflects the needs of all learners and is appropriately broad, diverse and ambitious. Educating children from Herm at Vauvert Primary School enables us to deliver against this element of the Strategy as it will allow them to be educated in line with their Guernsey-based peers, in age- and need-appropriate classes, with access to a wider curriculum than is currently available to them – through no fault of anyone but purely dealing with the reality of the very small number of children currently living on Herm.

‘The Committee also takes seriously our responsibility to use public resources as efficiently and effectively as possible. The States is currently facing significant financial challenges and we cannot ignore that this decision will save between £60,000 and £85,000 a year. We understand that this decision may not be welcomed by everyone in Herm, but we are focused on what is best for those children’s education and development, and on working with the children and their families to make this transition a success.’

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