



Jersey Schools Review Framework

Samarès School

School Road
St Clement
Jersey
JE2 6TG

Headteacher: Jenny Posner
Review date: 30 January - 1 February 2024

Summary

The school benefits from strong and effective leadership. Since the arrival of the headteacher and deputy headteacher two years ago, the school has been transformed. The hard work of leaders has been recognised by the Government of Jersey, and staff have been highly commended for their partnership work with outside agencies.

Some middle leaders are starting to develop their role and the leadership of special educational needs is a strength. The effectiveness of teaching is improving, particularly in reading, mathematics and art. Oracy is successfully established across the school and is supporting the learning and development of all pupils well.

Children make strong progress in Nursery and outcomes by the end of the early years are rising. The progress of pupils remains variable across the school, but by the end of Year 6, pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics are in line with other schools in Jersey.

The curriculum is developing well and becoming more engaging for pupils. Pupils say they love their school and appreciate the different learning opportunities and fun activities the school provides. Learning is enriched through visits to places of interest, including the beach and learning about different artists. Pupils enjoy reading, mathematics, physical education and developing a range of artistic skills.

The behaviour, personal development, and welfare of most pupils is exemplary. The school provides a safe and inviting environment in which pupils learn and play happily. One parent echoed the view of many stating, 'Children are the number one focus and everything that is put into place is to support their education. Having a child with additional needs, I cannot fault the support from the team... my child is able to achieve in his own way'.

Senior leaders recognise the need to continue to develop middle leaders and the curriculum. A strong sense of teamwork is targeting further improvements to pupil progress by supporting more consistently effective teaching across the school. All staff are rightly proud to work at the school. A typical response was, 'I'm so pleased to be part of this amazing

team! In our school the children, parents and the staff are valued, listened to, and supported all the time'.

Full report

Achievement

- There are pockets of strong achievement across the school and in different subjects. The best progress is made when what pupils are taught builds well on their previous learning.
- Children in the Nursery make strong progress and achieve well in developing their comprehension and learning about past and present. The learning environments, both inside and outside the classroom, spark their curiosity, providing irresistible activities and tactile resources for them to explore and learn.
- By the end of Reception in 2023, a much higher proportion of children achieved the early learning goals than previously. They currently make strong progress learning about the natural world and developing their comprehension. Although children progress well in their personal, social, emotional, and physical development, they do not currently make as much progress in reading, writing and mathematics as they could.
- Attainment in phonics is improving and pupils are increasingly using their phonic knowledge well to read and write new and unfamiliar words. This helps older pupils to develop fluency and a joy of reading.
- Achievement in Key Stage 1 is variable. At its best, learning builds well on pupils' previous knowledge and experiences, including in subjects like art, personal, social and health education (PSHE) and music. Pupils learn to work and collaborate nicely together, but in some classes, the limited focus on what they should be learning slows their academic progress.
- In science, younger pupils were observed developing their understanding of the natural world well. They also explored the use of magnets while older pupils developed their understanding of animal habitats as well as plants. Pupils make strong progress in art; their study of artists inspires them to develop a range of techniques in a range of mediums. In these as well as other subjects observed such as music, PE and computing, pupils develop confidence in using subject-specific vocabulary when answering questions.
- Highly effective adaptations made to the curriculum enable most pupils, including those eligible for Jersey Premium, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), and multilingual learners (MLL) to achieve well in Key Stages 1 and 2.
- Progress across Key Stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics is typically much stronger than in Key Stage 1. Although the proportion of pupils achieving age-related expectations across the school in reading, writing and mathematics is typically low, standards are rising. By the end of Year 6, proportions achieving this measure are similar to other schools in Jersey.
- Pupils achieve particularly well in oracy, grammar, punctuation, and spelling, reading, art and music. By the end of Key Stage 2 oracy is a significant strength.
- The written work of pupils in Key Stage 2 reflects more age-appropriate expectations and outcomes in writing than has previously been the case. Pupils were keen to show and share their written work.
- A review of a sample of workbooks in writing, mathematics, science, PSHE and art from across the school, typically reflects limited challenge for pupils with high prior attainment.
- Samarès School helps pupils to develop into confident, articulate, and well-rounded young people. They achieve well in reading, writing, mathematics and learning about the

local environment and wider world. Together this prepares all pupils well for their next stage of education either in a specialist placement or mainstream secondary school.

Behaviour, personal development, and welfare

- Highly effective policies and practice at Samarès lead to pupils making phenomenal progress in their personal development. This contributes to the behaviour of most pupils in lessons and at playtimes, being exemplary. Pupils are respectful and courteous. They learn how to keep themselves safe and how to be ready to learn. They know about the importance of sleep, taking regular exercise and eating healthily and how this contributes to their mental health and wellbeing.
- The use of zones of regulation has been a powerful strategy to help pupils to understand their feelings and to consider the feelings of others. Pupils delight in acting as peer mediators, serving on the school council, and supporting charities. Leaders' prioritisation of personal development, coupled with their strong values, ensure pupils with the most complex educational needs are fully included in all aspects of school life.
- Pupils take pride in their school, their work and in their appearance. They are keen to learn, such as learning to read challenging texts and expanding their vocabulary. They learn to express their opinions confidently and to listen to others, to disagree respectfully. In discussions with pupils from across the school, they expressed an impressive understanding of the importance of their education and the skills they learn for future life in both school and employment.
- An outdoor play initiative has led to significant improvements to the behaviour of pupils at playtimes. The outdoor provision encourages pupils to explore and question non-typical behaviours and to challenge stereotypes particularly pertaining to gender.
- Pupils' cultural development begins in the early years. A highly effective example of this was observed with children learning about Lunar New Year through music and high-quality visual aids.
- The '100 Things to do before you leave Samarès' programme provides pupils with enriching and memorable learning experiences. These lead to pupils experiencing a wide range of opportunities to learn about themselves, the community, their local environment, and wider opportunities across Jersey.
- The strong and effective PSHE programme helps pupils to learn about healthy and respectful relationships, what constitutes caring friends and the importance of looking after yourself. Lessons in PSHE are adapted extremely well to meet the needs of the pupils and to address any current or environmental issues.
- Pupils learn about the importance of democracy. A strong example was seen in an assembly focused on recent local political events to inspire pupils to engage with the democratic process both through the school council and later in life.
- Attendance is rising and is in line with other schools on the Island. The attendance of pupils with SEND is slightly lower than the rest of the school and is mostly attributed to significant medical needs.
- Staff all share in the responsibility for the welfare of pupils. Senior leaders ensure that all agreed policies related to the welfare of pupils are adhered to. This helps pupils to feel safe, valued, listened to, and respected. Pupils have a number of trusted adults who they would speak to if they had a problem. They are adamant that there is very little bullying and that any that occurred would be dealt with effectively by a member of staff.

Effectiveness of teaching

- Positive relationships between adults and pupils, and between the pupils themselves, underpin well-established classroom routines. In classes across the school, pupils enjoy learning and settle to work quickly. In accordance with the school's aims, teachers consistently help pupils to develop their oracy skills. They question pupils skilfully to encourage them to explain their reasoning.
- Children in the early years have benefited from the significant improvements made to the outdoor learning area. This encourages them to explore and learn through different activities such as climbing, playing in sand, and observing how water trickles down pipes.
- Although the effectiveness of teaching in the early years has significantly improved, and is strong in the Nursery, teaching for younger children elsewhere in the school does not always maximise opportunities for children to develop their learning, particularly in reading and writing. The teaching of phonics is improving well and helping pupils to develop fluency in early reading. Pupils read regularly each day; those who are behind in their reading are taught in small withdrawal groups to help them to catch up with their peers.
- In the most effective lessons across the school, teachers demonstrate strong subject knowledge. They use subject-specific language which reinforces learning. Topics are typically appropriate for pupils' age. A particularly effective example was seen in an English lesson where the teacher probed pupils to expand their language and encouraged them to research alternative words and phrases.
- In some areas learning is slower. This is because work does not always provide sufficient challenge for high prior attaining pupils, or it is not broken down into small enough steps to engage those pupils who sometimes struggle to understand.
- Although the teaching of reading and writing is typically well-planned across the school it is too varied in Key Stage 1. This is because expectations are not always high enough and strategies are not always applied equally well in parallel classes.
- Teachers use a mathematics scheme well which enables pupils to build on their knowledge and skills as they move up the school.
- The curriculum is carefully adapted for those pupils with the most complex needs. Support staff provide highly effective bespoke support for pupils with SEND. Small group interventions make appropriate use of visual aids and practical resources to support any pupils who need help. Staff work together to enhance the vocabulary and understanding of these pupils well in these sessions.
- The curriculum is enhanced by a wide range of activities with a focus on providing pupils with opportunities to take part in activities they would not normally experience. These include sea trips, making volcanoes on the beach, visits to local places of religious worship and presentations from visiting speakers.
- Pupils report they receive helpful feedback from staff about their work and understand how to improve it.
- The teaching of art is a strength and pupils develop an appropriate range of knowledge and skills including about famous artists. Pupils take pride in the presentation of their artwork. However even in art, as in other subjects, there is limited challenge for those pupils capable of achieving more.
- Work is underway to develop the science curriculum. However, teaching does not always build sufficiently well on previous learning. At times, some pupils are taught the same aspects of science covered during the previous year. The quality of provision in science improves in Key Stage 2 with evidence of pupils being encouraged to think scientifically.

Effectiveness of leadership and management

- The high expectations of the leadership team have resulted in a culture of improvement which staff understand and embrace. Senior leaders have an accurate view of what the school does well and what should be better. They provide clear strategic leadership that is leading to improvements in all aspects of the school.
- Together, leaders have set clear and high expectations of pupils and staff. They have acted swiftly, galvanising staff, and taking them on a journey of improvement. The leadership of the early years is developing well and recognises the important next steps to further improve children's learning and development.
- Under the clear direction of senior leaders, there is now an expectation of middle leaders developing their role and providing greater leadership in their areas of responsibility. Subject leadership of art is developing well. This is leading to higher aspirations of pupils and highly inclusive provision in the subject.
- Close monitoring of teaching and learning has led to professional development which staff have appreciated. However, further monitoring is required to promote highly effective teaching and learning.
- Senior leaders have acted appropriately to provide greater clarity for teachers about what should be taught in different subjects. This remains an area that senior leaders recognise needs to continue to develop and for this to be led by middle leaders.
- Leaders undertake a forensic review of the progress being made by different groups of pupils. The use of data enables them to promote equality of opportunity so that pupils eligible for Jersey Premium achieve in line with their peers. Equality is also promoted well through a curriculum that values diversity and promotes a positive school culture. Senior leaders ensure the school makes best use of additional funding to help raise standards, particularly for those pupils that are most vulnerable.
- The highly effective leadership of SEND ensures that appropriate provision is in place for these pupils, with small steps identified as required. However, not all staff are suitably well skilled at helping to de-escalate situations where pupils with complex needs become dysregulated. Consequently, senior leaders spend a disproportionate amount of time helping to restore calm when pupils display anxious behaviour. This takes senior leaders away from their strategic leadership responsibilities of further improving the school.
- Safeguarding is very well organised and effective. Appropriate training and clear systems are in place. All staff are involved in reporting and recording concerns, and actioning where appropriate. Leaders ensure that staff are vigilant in helping to protect pupils from radicalisation and extremism.
- The school works well with parents and a wide range of agencies. The 0-3 Pathways provision helps the school to quickly build strong relationships with families. This also enables the school to be better prepared to meet the needs of children when they join the Nursery.

Recommendations

The school should take the following actions:

1. Increase the capacity of senior leaders to enable them to improve the effectiveness of teaching further so that:
 - by the end of Reception children are better prepared for Year 1
 - the progress of pupils accelerates, particularly in Key Stage 1
 - all teachers become familiar with what represents highly effective practice
 - higher proportions of pupils work at age-related expectations across the school
 - pupils with high prior attainment are provided with a greater level of challenge.
2. Continue to develop the role of middle leaders and the curriculum guidance for their subject area(s) in order to promote teaching that builds more sequentially on previous learning and improve teachers' subject knowledge.

Information about the school

Age range of pupils: 3-11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

Number of pupils on the school roll: 294

Headteacher: Jenny Posner

School telephone number: 01534 735415

School website: www.samares.sch.je

Contextual information

- The headteacher has been in post since January 2022 and the deputy headteacher since February 2022.
- The school has a Nursery.
- A much higher proportion of pupils than in other Jersey schools are eligible for Jersey Premium. Numbers of pupils in this group are increasing in younger year groups.
- 25% of pupils have special educational needs or disabilities, this is much higher than in other Jersey schools.
- There is a high proportion of multilingual learners at 27.2% compared to other schools in Jersey.
- Samarès Pathways is Jersey's first school-linked child and family centre located in the heart of the Samarès community. Families can come together and access playgroups for children from 0–3 years of age. The centre runs through a partnership between Children, Young People, Education and Skills (CYPES), Health and Social Services and Family Nursing & Home Care.

Information about the review

Lessons in English, mathematics, PSHE, music, art, history, and physical education were observed. This included some small group work with targeted groups of pupils. Every class was visited at least once and for some classes this was done alongside the headteacher. Breakfast club and an assembly were also visited.

Reviewers held discussions with groups of pupils from across the school and listened to a sample of pupils reading.

Reviewers observed pupils on arrival at school in the morning and the behaviour of pupils in lessons, at playtimes and around the school.

Discussions were held with a range of senior and middle leaders and managers. A tour of the site was undertaken to check on the indoor and outdoor safety and security of the premises.

A broad range of documentation was scrutinised including data reports, the school's self-evaluation and improvement plan and information on the school's website. A number of policies were considered including the teaching and learning policy, behaviour policy and the Jersey Premium strategy.

The review team

The team was led by an experienced off-Island reviewer and consisted of a total of five reviewers.

Enquiries about this report should be addressed to Head School Improvement & Advisory Service, Children, Young People, Education and Skills, Highlands Campus, PO Box 142, St Saviour, Jersey JE4 8QJ.