



Jersey Schools Review Framework – Independent Report of

Victoria College Preparatory School

Pleasant Street,
St Helier
Jersey
JE2 4RR

Headteacher: Mr D Pateman

Review date: 2-4 May 2023

Summary

This school has an exceptional ethos, with a winning combination of high expectations, academic rigour and warm, trusting relationships. As a result, happy pupils thrive, achieve very high standards in their work and are fully involved in the rich life of the school.

Pupils' attainment and progress in their studies and in their personal development are excellent. Their achievement at the end of Key Stage 2 is well above the Jersey average.

Staff challenge pupils to do their best, while also caring about their welfare and mental health. A nurturing and inclusive atmosphere ensures that pupils learn self-discipline, respect for others and studious habits. A positive approach to managing behaviour and promoting the school's values helps pupils to revel in their childhood and education.

Leaders at all levels share an ambitious vision for the school and are committed to relentless improvement. Leaders are focused on pupils as individuals and are meticulous about tracking and reviewing their progress and well-being.

Leaders have thoroughly reviewed the curriculum on offer and made sure it is fully in line with the expectations of the Jersey curriculum. Topics studied are ambitious, stimulating and challenging. Teachers have used their extensive and deep subject knowledge to enrich and extend learning across all subjects. Leaders and teachers have developed impressive specialist resources, rooms and facilities to help promote high achievement in music, science, physical education and the arts.

Senior leaders have strengthened the leadership team by developing phase and subject leader roles. These leaders have made an impressive start to their roles and are already making a tangible impact on the already high standards of teaching and the depth of the curriculum.

Pupils clearly love their school. When asked what they were most proud of, pupils proudly responded, 'We are inclusive and we welcome everyone - respecting their differences and/or disabilities.', and 'It's equality, which means that all people are treated the same.'

Full report

Achievement

- Pupils' attainment at the end of Year 6 is well above the Jersey average. They make very strong progress in reading, writing and mathematics from their typically high starting points on entry to the school.
- Pupils eligible for Jersey Premium, multi-lingual learners and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) all make progress in line with their peers and achieve the same high standards at the end of Key Stage 2.
- Leaders and staff ensure that there are no barriers to achievement for pupils with SEND. Sensitive support in the classroom and additional resources, including a sensory room, ensure that all pupils achieve their very best.
- Pupils are articulate, thoughtful and enthusiastic when talking about what they have learned. They use subject-specific vocabulary and are highly reflective about what they are learning.
- Pupils are always keen to learn more. The challenge of learning clearly means a lot to all pupils. They are eager to know what they are moving on to next and often ask about how they can improve their work or further their knowledge.
- When asked, pupils work together with impressive maturity and diligence. Their excellent cooperative and collaborative skills help to increase and deepen their own learning.
- Pupils' books, folders and practical work is beautifully presented with pride, clearly demonstrating their diligent habits. Much of the quality of work around the school and in classrooms is exceptional.
- Pupils read fluently and enjoy a wide range of fiction and non-fiction books. Leaders and staff have considerably strengthened the quality of the reading curriculum in recent years. Leaders are wisely planning to improve the school's library provision as well as enhancing all teachers' expertise in challenging texts and high-quality children's literature.
- Pupils' attainment and progress is excellent in science and the foundation subjects. Standards across the whole curriculum are high. Pupils' scientific knowledge is comprehensive and extremely well-developed. Pupils' accomplishments in music, the arts, technology and games are superb.
- Teachers assess pupils' learning carefully as they progress through the curriculum. As a result, pupils are extremely well-prepared for secondary school subjects.
- Learning and achievement in personal, social and health education is of an exceptional standard. Pupils are able to discuss challenging topics with sensitivity and maturity, including the representation of women, racism, mental health and puberty.

Behaviour, personal development and welfare

- Pupils are dedicated to the school's values and do their best to live up to them.
- Pupils are respectful to adults and each other. They are polite, considerate and empathetic. Teamwork and mutual respect are golden threads seen throughout the school.
- Pupils are confident, friendly and unfailingly courteous. Their enthusiasm is tangible throughout the school, but they are consistently quick to respond and be attentive when asked. The school has a calm, studious and orderly atmosphere, with pupils getting on with the business of the day with well-directed energy and dedication.

- The school rightly prides itself on its inclusive culture. Pupils enjoy and celebrate diversity. They deeply respect different religions and cultures. They are helpful, kind and empathetic when their peers have different needs.
- The school's inclusive approach is having a definite impact on pupils' increased understanding of the wider world. Pupils' support for each other is deep-seated and habitual. Bullying or name-calling is rare. Any instances of derogatory language are tackled with uncompromising firmness and used as a learning opportunity.
- Pupils relish the opportunity to take on leadership and responsibility. They love taking part in competitions and charity events.
- Pupils appreciate the history and legacy of the school and what its reputation really stands for. The school's long tradition of the house system encourages healthy participation and competition, while also helping pupils to appreciate each other's successes as well as winning themselves. In this way, pupils develop a strong sense of character and moral purpose.
- Pupils' welfare and safety are top priorities. Pupils are helped to feel and be safe, including when online, while learning how to manage risk appropriately.
- Pupils enjoy school and attend well. Overall attendance for all pupils and groups is above the Jersey average at over 96%.
- The school's personal, social, health and education (PSHE) curriculum is impressive, well-planned and ambitious. Leaders and staff are passionately committed to ensuring that pupils' personal development education is as exceptional as the academic curriculum. Lessons are planned very effectively with challenging topics managed extremely well by teachers in the weekly lesson. Pupils learn about how to eat healthily, the importance of physical exercise and how to maintain respectful and healthy relationships. A wealth of additional activities, assemblies, trips and visitors supplement the curriculum and help pupils to learn about the wider world and growing up.
- Participation in clubs and activities is prized and the school's rich programme of extra-curricular activities genuinely provides something for everyone. Pupils excel in sports, music, drama and arts.

Effectiveness of teaching

- Teachers have excellent subject knowledge and use this very effectively to plan well-structured lessons to inspire pupils' curiosity and love of learning.
- Sequences of lessons are designed extremely well and ensure that pupils learn content and skills – and remember it when they return to previous topics.
- Resources are varied and useful. Pupils know how to use electronic devices and classroom resources to help their learning. Outdoor activities, trips and visits link carefully to the taught curriculum to enhance pupils' learning and make connections between subjects.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils. They challenge pupils to do their best and think more deeply. At its best, teaching is characterised by probing questions and opportunities for pupils to share their ideas at a sophisticated level. Leaders are rightly encouraging all teachers to gain confidence and expertise in promoting pupils' oracy and debating skills.
- Pupils are given plenty of time to practise new skills to embed their learning. Teachers carefully check pupils' responses and ensure that they have truly grasped concepts before moving them on too quickly. Teachers are highly skilled in using assessment to

catch any pupils who may need extra help, as well as making sure that they have a reliable measure of how well pupils have progressed in their subjects.

- In mathematics, teachers make sure that pupils are able to reason and put their mathematical thinking into words in order to achieve real mastery. As with other subjects, pupils are encouraged to use impressive precise vocabulary to explain their mathematical methods.
- Leaders and teachers have worked hard to develop impressive specialist facilities for many subjects. These, coupled with expert and inspiring teaching, for example in the arts, technology, science and music, enable pupils to acquire precise technical knowledge and expertise, together with creative thinking. As a result, pupils' finished work reaches an impressively high standard.
- Teaching topics are carefully sequenced to maximise learning. For example, the science curriculum has been developed into a rich set of motivating, challenging and inspiring learning experiences for pupils.
- Precise teaching of skills and coached practice help all pupils to achieve well in physical education and games.
- Additional resources for pupils who need extra support, or those with SEND, are seamlessly introduced into classrooms and lesson-planning. Teaching is adapted where needed in order to ensure that pupils can learn alongside each other. Teachers and teaching assistants are highly skilled in supporting pupils sensitively.
- Pupils are deservedly proud of their well-presented work, whether in books, folders or in the attractive displays around the school.

Effectiveness of leadership and management

- This school benefits from strong, knowledgeable, united and highly effective leadership at all levels.
- Leaders are highly ambitious and have embedded a compelling vision for the school to be high performing, happy and inclusive. They have inspired the staff team to share and live out this vision in their daily work.
- Leaders know staff and pupils extremely well. Systems for monitoring the school's performance are precise. Leaders' analysis of data relating to achievement, behaviour and safeguarding is meticulous and ensures that any concerns about progress or welfare are quickly picked up and dealt with. No stone is left unturned. The school's self-evaluation is thorough, reflective and built on reliable evidence of leaders' close monitoring.
- Astute leaders have ensured that the school curriculum is closely aligned with the Jersey curriculum and offers pupils a broad and balanced preparation for the next stage of their education. Leaders have also prioritised extra-curricular activities and enrichment to enable pupils to leave the school as rounded citizens, eager to take on new challenges with resilience and enthusiasm.
- Opportunities for pupils to lead by example, to reflect on the past and future and work together on projects, sports and cultural events abound and give the school its distinctive ethos, while helping to build pupils' character and moral purpose.
- Leaders are whole-heartedly committed to developing staff, through national professional qualifications (NPQ) or through supportive monitoring of teaching and learning. New staff are supported extremely well and settle into the school's routines quickly.
- Senior leaders have strengthened further their influence through training phase and subject leaders, who have made great strides with developing their strategic roles and ability to challenge themselves and others.

- Staff feel supported well with their workload and well-being and are proud to work in the school.
- Leaders seek out, value and act on the views of parents. Pupils' views are also valued and taken seriously.
- The school benefits from the oversight and support of a governing body. Governors are accomplished professionals who are able to exercise useful influence and expertise when needed. They know the school well and take an active interest in pupils' work and staff wellbeing.
- The school holds a silver Rights Respecting award, which is a fitting recognition of its inclusive shared values. Pupils understand the importance of their rights as a child.
- Safeguarding is effective. Leaders make the safety and welfare of pupils a priority. They ensure that all safer recruitment processes are followed in line with Jersey expectations. Safeguarding leaders are well trained and have a thorough understanding of pupils' potential vulnerabilities and carry out their duties assiduously. Staff know pupils well and have been trained to recognise any signs that a pupil may be at risk or vulnerable.
- Comprehensive systems are in place to help staff to keep pupils safe. Pupils are taught about safety, including online safety. Records of concern demonstrate leaders' swift actions to seek support for pupils, including collaborative work with specialist agencies.
- Parents are supportive of the school. Typical of many, one parent commented, 'the school is very inclusive for all its pupils'.

Recommendations

The school should take the following actions:

- Continue to develop the strategic role of phase and subject leaders in order to:
 - further enhance all teachers' confidence and expertise in encouraging pupils' oracy, debate and discussion in lessons
 - ensure that all teachers share best practice within year groups and across the school
 - further increase all teachers' expertise in and confidence with high quality texts and compelling children's literature.

Information about the school

Age range of pupils: 7–11

Gender of pupils: Boys

Number of pupils on the school roll: 268

Headteacher: Mr Dan Pateman

School telephone number: 01534 723468

School website: www.vcp.sch.je

Contextual information

- Victoria College Preparatory school is a fee-paying GoJ school for boys aged 7 to 11.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for Jersey Premium is 1%.
- The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is 8%.
- 18% of pupils are multi-lingual learners.
- The school shares a governing body with the secondary college.

Information about the review

Reviewers checked documentation and policies relating to safeguarding. Site security arrangements were also reviewed. Behaviour records and attendance figures were scrutinised and discussed. Reviewers considered the school's records and analysis of published attainment data and information about pupils' progress.

Reviewers considered the responses of parents and staff to the online surveys, as well as the school's own survey findings. Lessons were visited across all year groups and in a range of subjects. Some of these were accompanied by school leaders. Reviewers also observed breaktime and lunchtime activities. Meetings were held with staff, leaders and groups of pupils. The lead reviewer listened to small groups of pupils reading and discussed their books.

Reviewers looked at pupils' work in a range of subjects, alongside subject leaders.

The lead reviewer met with the chair of governors and reviewed minutes of governing body meetings.

The review team

The review 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.