

**INDEPENDENT EVALUATION OF THE
THE JERSEY SCHOOLS REVIEW PILOT
2016-2018**

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Introduction

Following the introduction of a new, systematic approach to school evaluation and the improvement of the Education Service's schools, the Jersey School Review Framework was piloted between November 2016 and December 2018. The pilot period accomplished a review of nearly every provided school in Jersey, with feedback to the school.

This report was commissioned by the Education Directorate to provide an independent review of the Jersey Schools Review Framework, its processes, effectiveness, and efficacy in furthering the ambitions of the Department (Children, Young People, Education and Skills, or CYPES) and Government of Jersey under the Common Strategic Policy and Government Plan 2020-2023. The report presents the findings of the independent evaluation of the pilot phase of the Jersey School Review Framework, which set out to establish:

- the effectiveness of the design of the Jersey School Review Framework as a peer-review led school accountability process, in the context of Jersey's education system (section 2 of the report)
- the effectiveness of the implementation of the Jersey School Review Process in its pilot phase, November 2016 to December 2018 (section 3), and the quality of review reports (section 4)
- the impact of the Jersey School Review system on school improvement, including through the associated training and development activities; the school reviews and subsequent improvement activity; the participation of school leaders on peer-review teams, and the use by the Department of the Jersey School Review Framework outcome data to inform and deliver school improvement work (including thematic reviews) (section 5)
- the contribution of the school reviews to the Government of Jersey's ambition for children, as defined in the Common Strategic Policy (CSP) for the current political term (section 6).

Summary of findings

1. The Jersey Schools Review Framework has proven suitable for the purpose of reviewing the quality of all¹ publicly provided schools in Jersey. The Framework provided an effective mechanism and methodology for conducting the reviews.
2. The school review model can be described as an externally led peer-review. All of the school reviews were led (90%+) or supported by expert off-island reviewers having substantial experience of evaluating schools in England and beyond. These lead reviewers were complemented by trained school leaders and senior advisers from Jersey who completed the review teams.
3. This formula is well suited to the context of Jersey. The external perspective brings reliability to the process and enables Jersey schools to be benchmarked against those elsewhere in a cost-

¹ One provided school has yet to be reviewed.

effective way, while sharing their skills with leaders in the Jersey school system. We consider independent expert leadership of school peer-reviews in Jersey to be essential to the quality, rigour and probity of the process.

4. Extending the initial pilot to include all schools has enabled many school leaders to be trained in evaluation techniques. Participation in reviews has amounted to powerful professional development for those involved and contributed to raising sights and ambitions for their own schools and pupils.
5. The review of Jersey's schools has provided Education's Standards and Achievement team within CYPES with valuable baseline information about schools' strengths and areas for development which will assist in focusing resources, on those schools and aspects most in need of challenge and support.
6. The reviews have already sharpened school improvement activity in Jersey and there is much associative evidence which points towards a positive impact on the quality and standards of schools. The Jersey Schools Reviews and the Framework by which they are conducted together have the power to raise ambition, expectations and aspirations across the school system.
7. The review reports on schools during the pilot phases have provided a professional quality assurance mechanism, undertaken by schools for schools and for those who oversee and support schools. The pilot reports have been internal to the system but no less influential for that. Taken together, they provide the basis for an informed overview of the strengths and areas for improvement in the school system, as well as a quality check for individual schools. Reports could well be summarised in letters to parents, accessible to the wider community via schools' websites, as is proposed. Reports of externally led peer-reviews in Jersey are addressed to the schools themselves unlike, say, inspection reports in England where all schools have governing boards and parents can exercise choice through open enrolment. It would be unfortunate if school reviews in Jersey were used to increase divisions in an already complex school system that serves the range of children in the relatively small Jersey community.
8. We conclude that the Jersey Schools Review system serves the States' aspirations for children and young people in Jersey by shining a light on the deal they are getting from their schools and how that could be improved. The reviews play an indispensable part in identifying the best practice in the system as well as pointing to priorities for school improvement. The school reviews put children first.

Recommendations

9. We recommend that externally led peer-reviews should be embedded in Jersey's school evaluation and improvement work. Reviews play an indispensable role in identifying the best practice in the system as well as pointing out priorities for school improvement. Support can then be focused on where it is most needed. The impact of reviews on leadership development

is unequalled and reviews contribute strongly to the management and improvement of the school system.

10. Lessons that can be learned from the pilot include:
 - a. continuing to refine and apply the successful model of peer school reviews led by independent off-island lead reviewers
 - b. ensuring a succession of high quality off-island lead reviewers, fully briefed on the characteristics of education in Jersey
 - c. taking further steps to ensure the impartiality of peer reviewers by requiring and acting on declarations of interests when deploying review teams
 - d. improving the quality assurance of review reports to ensure their quality and consistency
 - e. improving feedback to teachers and others whose work has been observed
 - f. strengthening the accountability of school leaders and senior advisers for school improvement
 - g. consider seconding to the island the headteacher of a high performing but challenging school (who is a national leader of education) to support school improvement in primary schools
 - h. reviewing the efficacy and resourcing of school improvement boards
 - i. developing a more efficient and coordinated approach to supporting school improvement by all parts of the Administration
 - j. promoting a more cooperative culture of inter-school partnership or system leadership, particularly in the secondary school sector, where links with matched high performing schools in England would be beneficial.

1. The role and purpose of school evaluation

Strategic policy

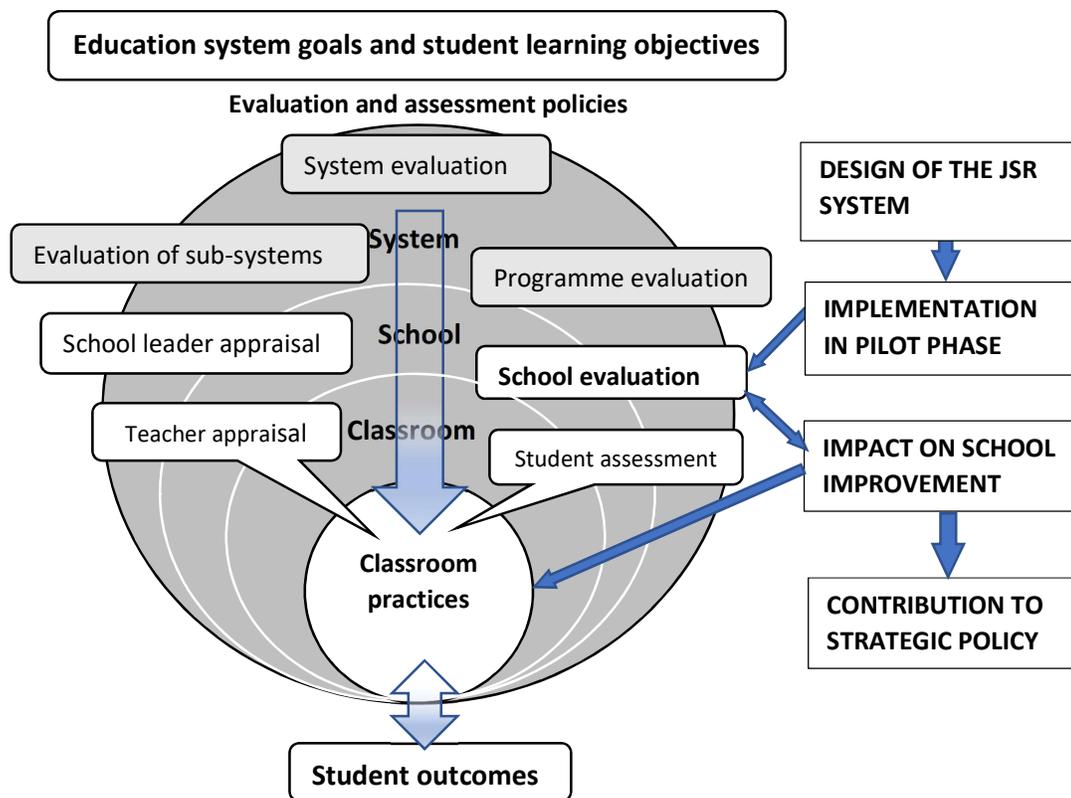
11. The Jersey Schools Review is a pilot quality assurance system which operates in the context of the Government's Common Strategic Policy. This Policy has five strategic aims, the first of which is: "We put children first." This is defined as follows. "We will do this by protecting and supporting children, by improving their educational outcomes and by involving and engaging children in decisions that affect their everyday lives."
12. The headline measures by which the success in achieving this strategic aim are also defined as: "What we will achieve? As a result of our actions during our term of office, we want all children to:
 - a. grow up safely, feeling part of a loving family and a community that cares
 - b. live healthy lives, enjoying the best health and wellbeing possible
 - c. learn and achieve, by having the best start in life and going on to fulfil their potential
 - d. be valued and involved in the decisions that affect their everyday lives

- e. be able to attend schools that are well-resourced, including good levels of financial headroom so that schools can positively support the achievement of the best outcomes for all children.”²

From policy to plan

13. These outcomes are developed further in the Children and Young People’s Plan 2019-23³ and its intentions for supporting delivery of the aim that “all children in Jersey learn and achieve”. One of the measures already piloted is the Jersey Schools Review (JSR) Framework, which “places greater emphasis on supporting schools to self-evaluate and identify areas of best practice and where improvement is needed. The framework aims to increase the confidence held in the quality of the service offered by our schools to pupils, parents, school staff and the wider community; it will also provide schools with the tools to evaluate and improve the quality of their provision.”⁴ Jersey has made great strides towards the international ideal of a comprehensive assessment and evaluation framework (figure 1) with the JSR Handbook as the school-focused key.

Figure 1. An evaluation and assessment framework (adapted from OECD⁵)



² States of Jersey (2018) *Common Strategic Policy 2018-2022*.

<https://www.gov.je/government/planningperformance/strategicplanning/pages/commonstrategicpolicy.aspx>

³ Government of Jersey (2019) *Children and Young People’s Plan 2019-2023, Putting Children First . . .*

⁴ Government of Jersey (2019) *Children and Young People’s Plan 2019-2023, Technical document to support delivery*.

⁵ OECD (2015) *Synergies for effective learning*, OECD. Paris.

14. The JSR Handbook is important because it not only provides the basis for whole-school evaluation but, as indicated above, is a resource for school self-evaluation and the performance evaluation or appraisal of headteachers and other school staff. In well-developed education systems, whole school evaluation, whether external or peer-review, is a pivotal part of a coherent approach to evaluation and assessment.
15. School reviews in Jersey have been piloted as a means of informing the Department about the effectiveness of each publicly funded school in order to identify its strengths and recommend improvements. They are management tools for the publicly funded system. But the approach to reviews, which involve school leaders from across the Government of Jersey as peer reviewers, means that they are also powerfully developmental. The commissioning of off-island lead reviewers provides the necessary expertise and independence to ensure that the review process and outcomes is robust and reliable.

2. Design of the Jersey Schools Review System

Development of the Jersey Schools Review

16. Jersey introduced the Jersey Schools Review Handbook ('the Handbook') in February 2017 after trying out an initial version in three (pre-) pilot school reviews. The Handbook provides a framework and guidance for reviewers, which are informed by the school evaluation and inspection frameworks in other jurisdictions but tailored to the particular context of Jersey. It is reported that several other school review systems were examined before accepting that England's framework would provide the most suitable basis for Jersey's own system. Former HMI (Her Majesty's Inspectors) helped develop the Handbook and provided training for reviewers. They have subsequently led 90 percent of the reviews.
17. The Handbook is now in its third iteration. The edition produced in February 2017, which took account of the first three pilot reviews, was revised two years later (January 2019) and is scheduled to be available in September 2019.
18. The development of the Jersey Schools Review system has several commendable aspects.
 - a. Firstly, it did not reinvent the wheel of school evaluation but researched, selected and adapted the model most suited to needs in Jersey. These needs include a clear emphasis on children's wellbeing, development and achievement, expressed succinctly in the States' ambition of Jersey being the best place in the world for children to grow up.
 - b. Secondly, Jersey has learned from its previous attempts⁶ to embed self-evaluation approaches when deciding how to take the next step in quality assurance. Practitioners gained some experience of assessing their work against criteria.
 - c. Thirdly, the chosen model of *externally led peer-review* is ideal for the Jersey context. This approach is developmental, building the capacity of school leaders to look rigorously and systematically at the quality of their own schools as a result of appraising others, as well as robust in terms of incorporating expert independent validation. Peer

⁶ Based on the Jersey Self-Evaluation Document

- evaluation is widespread in England and is most reliable when the team is led by a trained and experienced external (i.e. independent) evaluator.
- d. Fourthly, Jersey has developed its review system through consultation, thus achieving a large measure of consensus. It is widely claimed by school leaders to provide helpful direction for school improvement and excellent professional development when they join review teams. School leaders are consistently positive about how much they have learnt from lead reviewers.
 - e. Fifthly, Jersey has undertaken an extensive pilot of the review. From the initial three reviews in January 2017, it was decided to continue the pilot for the remaining two terms of the school year and then to continue until all schools had been reviewed. This strategy has given the school sector-wide familiarisation with reviews and embedded the system successfully within the quality assurance and school improvement strategies of the then Education Department, now CYPES. This wholesale pilot has also provided a baseline for the quality of the school system – an education Domesday book – covering nearly every Government of Jersey school.

Changes to review procedures

19. The changes from the 2017 Review Framework, under which the first reviews of almost all provided schools took place, to the 2019 Framework are relatively minor. In the procedural sections (Foreword, Introduction and Part 1. Supporting schools through review), editorial changes include changes consequent upon the public sector restructure in the States of Jersey which was announced in March 2018.⁷ The reorganisation has brought education, previously a separate functional Department, into a new 'Department for Children, Young People, Education and Skills' (CYPES).
20. The Group Director of Education is ultimately responsible for the Jersey Schools Review System. Schools are linked with the Education Directorate through a bench of senior advisers (formerly 'professional partners') led by the Director of Standards and Achievement. The senior advisers participate in reviews of schools with which they are not linked and they follow-up the reviews of their linked schools. The experience gained in reviews is being applied increasingly to the ongoing challenge of raising achievement in schools as well as supporting their improvement.
21. Other procedural changes to the Handbook include:
 - reduction of the period of notice of reviews from two weeks to four days
 - strengthening arrangements for surveying parents and staff
 - giving the review team access to the school's self-evaluation and development plan
 - incorporating the Data Protection (Jersey) Law 2018
 - escalation of serious issues raised by parents or staff
 - discontinuing evidence-base reviews by the Department unless the need for an investigation is triggered.
22. These amendments will help improve the efficiency and effectiveness of reviews. Scrutiny of review reports shows significant variation in their consistency, format and content. It is reported

⁷ <https://www.gov.je/News/2018/pages/publicsectorrestructure.aspx>

that at the outset of the review process, the Director of Standards and Achievement agreed with the Group Director and lead reviewers to explore different styles of report writing. Subsequently, a style guide has been commissioned that will be used from September 2019 to ensure consistency in format and content of each report.

The evaluation schedule

23. The JSR Framework is closely aligned with the framework for inspecting schools in England introduced in 2015, albeit applied with a very different, peer-based, methodology. The JSR evaluation schedule requires evaluation of:
- achievement
 - behaviour, personal development and welfare
 - the effectiveness of teaching
 - effectiveness of leadership and management.
24. The schedule also describes the review of the effectiveness, quality and standards, of early years provision and the effectiveness of 16-19 education. Notes and definitions are included in relation to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, curriculum and assessment, the early learning goals and – of particular importance – safeguarding and child protection arrangements.
25. The emphasis is on support for school improvement, and reviews do not set out to provide a graded judgement on the whole school – as is done elsewhere, but to indicate whether provision in each of the four areas listed above is outstanding, good, or fair, or whether it requires significant improvement. There is ample evidence that the Handbook is a potent tool for school improvement. It is understood and used by schools for their own self-evaluation as well as providing effectively for the evaluation of schools against the Government’s strategic aims for children and young people as set out earlier.

Fitness for purpose of the JSR Handbook

26. The JSR Handbook 2019 has just been published and will apply to reviews undertaken from September 2019. There are strong reasons for continuing with the 2019 Handbook for the next round of school reviews and into the foreseeable future. For example
- a. The Handbook serves its purpose well as a manual for Jersey schools Reviews
 - b. A cadre of Jersey school leaders, headteachers and deputies, has been trained in its use and in evaluation methodology based on the Handbook
 - c. The Handbook provides a comprehensive basis for school self-evaluation and is familiar in part to school staff beyond the senior leaders
 - d. By explaining best practice and how it can be assessed, the Handbook has the power to raise ambitions and drive school improvement notwithstanding its use in reviews
 - e. The Handbook covers the range of pupil groups, abilities and equality issues which are present in the Jersey pupil population, as well as provision for SEND and additional resource centre provision, behaviour challenges and Jersey premium.
 - f. Off-island lead reviewers are knowledgeable about the Handbook and expert in leading school reviews based on it.

27. This last point is particularly important. If Jersey school reviews continue to be externally led, it is crucial that lead reviewers are trained and practised in using a Jersey-based Handbook. The Department has organised succession planning and - with the help of its existing lead reviewers - has identified new off-island lead reviewers having the relevant experience, to replace those that are retiring.
28. Now that a sound basis for school reviews has been piloted across the school system, the process deserves to be further embedded. Owing to the growing understanding by the Jersey education community and reviewers of the JSR Handbook, we advise against any further significant change to the JSR review criteria before the next phase of Jersey school reviews has been undertaken.
29. At present the review reports are internal documents and – as befits a pilot scheme – are not published. Consequently, the reports have had very little if any circulation within schools or the Department. This limits the marshalling of support for school improvement and the extent to which the staff in schools have a first-hand understanding of the review findings. We agree that it would have been inappropriate to publish the pilot review reports or circulate them more widely, particularly where reports indicated a need for significant improvement. Publication of increasingly dated pilot reports at this stage would be unfair to the great majority of schools that have acted on the findings of the pilot reviews and moved on.
30. For the future roll-out of school reviews, we consider that the idea of proposal to summarise findings, i.e. the strengths and priorities for development, in a letter to parents has merit. This could be published on the school’s web site, together with a response from the school. The full report is primarily a document for professional use but should be available on request rather than published automatically. These are sensitive policy matters for CYPES and the Government.

3. Implementation of the Jersey Schools Review Process

Training of lead and other reviewers

31. The lead reviewers all attended a 2-day induction course which covered the Jersey context and review procedures. Newer off-island lead reviewers are inducted by the experienced ones and advised first to shadow a lead reviewer and then to join a review as a team reviewer. There was recently a training day for all the lead reviewers (March 2019).
32. All headteachers and deputy heads were initially offered training as team reviewers. The prospective team reviewers have a day’s initial training – on review procedures, including being “taught how to write effective evaluations, what to look for, and how to articulate this” as one said. The training itself was said to have had a positive effect on schools, not only in enhancing evaluation skills but also helping to develop a shared language in articulating their effectiveness. Many reviewers need ongoing training and supervision when on the review. At least one lead reviewer collects all the evidence forms at the end of the day on Wednesday, ‘marks’ them and speaks to reviewers about them the following day. Team reviewers acknowledge how much they

learn about evidence-based evaluation from this process and working with the off-island lead reviewer.

The school review process in practice

33. The process is a three-day event, typically Tuesday to Thursday. On day 1, the lead reviewer (off-island) and a senior adviser visit the school where the senior adviser is likely to concentrate on the school's arrangements for safeguarding and wellbeing. One lead reviewer described how she spends time with the headteacher, talks through the self-evaluation form, tours the school and meets staff before withdrawing to plan the review. Pre-review plans include data and information from the Department and 'review trails' which specify matters suggested by pre-review information and data. The other team members join the review on Wednesday and Thursday. They normally comprise one or more trained school leaders and and/or on occasion another senior supervisor or even another lead reviewer.
34. The team reviewers are reported to be 'very varied in calibre' but do include some 'cracking good deputies'. We believe that it should be the responsibility of heads to quality assure any deputies they put forward as a reviewer. The Department could establish guiding criteria – which should include experience of working at a whole school level in reviewing the work of their own school. The lead reviewer has multiple tasks in training and monitoring the work of the reviewers, assuring the quality of the evidence, as well as leading the review and writing the report. The three-day model allows just enough time to do all this in a primary school review. Where more resource is need, the team is augmented rather than extending the review. Secondary school reviews employ more off-island reviewers and may have a complement of up to eight reviewers.
35. Jersey is a small education community with a limited number of schools, so there are occasions when reviewers may have connections with the schools they have been asked to review that are simply too close. Several examples were provided, for instance, of reviewers whose children had attended the school, who had a close family member working in the school, or had other very close connections that could lead to their impartiality being questioned. When arranging reviews, reviewers should be required to record conflicts of interest and headteachers who have concerns about the connections of a particular reviewer should be able to raise them.
36. Lead reviewers say they would find it helpful to receive in advance a profile of each reviewer in order to help plan the review and deploy the team appropriately. One also commented that headteacher-reviewers were good at 'leaving their baggage behind at the door' of the school they were to review.

Before the review

37. Schools were informed of their forthcoming review about two weeks before its commencement. Shortly after this initial notification, the lead reviewer initiated an introductory 'phone call to explain more about the process and discuss arrangements. Schools welcomed these arrangements but felt that the two-week advance notice of their review was too long. It allowed anxiety to build up and tempted some schools to over-prepare, despite the Department's efforts to encourage the school to work normally and teachers not to undertake any more preparation

than normal. One headteacher held back on telling staff that the review was happening having received the call when she and the deputy were away on a school residential with a group of children. "It still felt like a very long wait." The Department has reduced the period of advance notice to four days for reviews in the future.

38. Since the JSR Handbook was published, headteachers have not only refined their school self-evaluation skills but also in some cases become adept at managing their staff in anticipation of an external review. When this is done sensibly, staff apprehension is reduced and they feel comfortable and well prepared. One headteacher said they had revised its self-evaluation form (SEF) and encouraged staff not to over-prepare.

The review process

39. The Handbook sets out the protocols and procedures for school review in great detail. It provides a thorough basis for quality assuring the review process and is valued by senior leaders as a resource which has applications in their work.
40. Notwithstanding the training they had received, members of review teams – senior advisers and school leaders alike – found there was much to learn when undertaking the review. Managing the team and assuring quality was a major part of the role of lead reviewers. Lead reviewers spent much of their time after the first day working with team reviewers, challenging their evidence and the basis for their findings. Reviewers commend the experience as providing valuable professional development.
41. For example, one senior adviser, who had undertaken several reviews with a different lead reviewer each time, was positive about its contribution to her skills. "I learnt how to: write under pressure and more succinctly; be more evaluative; how to listen and observe more sharply." Headteachers and deputies are in no doubt about the great professional development benefits of participating in the team reviewer role.
42. Reviews were mainly well-received by schools but were not necessarily comfortable experiences. As one witness said, "the review process was honest, but a bit brutal." Staff views surveyed after their reviews showed that the great majority of headteachers felt their reviews were fair and conducted professionally. Other staff were less positive the more junior they were.
43. Communicating with people whose work is being evaluated is both essential and just, especially when it comes to relaying perceptions of the quality and effectiveness of that work. The Handbook encourages reviewers to offer feedback and teachers to take advantage of this. In practice, the process varies across the system. Some teachers who take up the offer felt the feedback was 'a bit heavy' others found the process rushed or feedback only offered on one day. Many teachers welcomed the offer of feedback although in at least one school, none took up the offer. We suggest the Handbook could give more advice on conducting a feedback dialogue, and that training in this aspect would also benefit school leaders in their day-to-day work.
44. In some reviews, all staff that were observed had personal one-to-one feedback from members of the review team. This was at its best when there was time to discuss what had been

observed. Where feedback was vague, or based on sketchy evidence, it invited challenge, but some reviewers did not permit discussion. This could have been because they were inexperienced evaluators and less sure of their ground. Witnesses commented on the high quality of feedback from lead reviewers but found that other reviewers were less skilled.

45. Feedback to the senior leadership team was generally praised and the opportunity for discussion and further explanation of findings welcomed. Often, but not always, the senior adviser for the school was present. This is to be encouraged since they can give or broker any support necessary to implement recommendations.
46. Review reports are written shortly after the review and sent in draft to headteachers for correction of any material facts before being sent to the Department for checking and issue of the report to the school. The lead reviewer is responsible for the report. Other members of the review team are not normally involved in writing the report, nor do they have the opportunity of commenting on a draft or seeing the final report.

4. The quality of and usefulness of reports

47. Thirty-eight full and two short reviews were completed between November 2016 and December 2018. These included all the 24 primary schools, all but one of the secondaries, the two special schools and the eight additional resource centres (ARCs). We agree with those witnesses that felt the ARCs should in future be included as specialist provision in the reviews of schools in which they are based. The review team should include the necessary special needs and disabilities expertise.
48. All the 38 full school reviews resulted in written reports which broadly followed the specification provided in the Handbook. The reviews were conducted by seven lead reviewers, six of whom were off-island consultants. The analysis which follows relates to the 38 reviews carried out – not the two short review pilots conducted in November and December 2018.

Format of reports

49. It appears that for the first three reviews the format of the reports was being developed. Additional headings were added over this time and the language used for the areas of foci changed. This is not surprising as this was a pre-pilot and the most appropriate format was being sought. The format agreed upon and applied for the remaining primary and secondary school reports was:
 - Summary
 - Recommendations
 - Achievement
 - Behaviour, personal development and welfare
 - Effectiveness of teaching
 - Effectiveness of leadership and management
 - Information about the school
 - Information about the review
 - The review team
 - The Jersey schools review process.

50. The format for the additional resource provision was also altered from the first review in December 2016 of a special school. The agreed subsequent format for reports was a letter covering:
- Context
 - Information about the review
 - Achievement
 - Behaviour, personal development and welfare
 - Effectiveness of teaching
 - Effectiveness of leadership and management
 - Recommendations for improvement.
51. As the reviews commence a new phase or cycle, consideration should be given to including an evaluation of the school's progress since its previous review. This would increase accountability, record success and indicate where the pace of improvement needs more action or support.

Strength and clarity of judgements and quality of writing

52. The great majority of reports contained judgements that were clear, convincing and supported by evidence. However, there were some discrepancies in judgements; for example:
- a. two reports contained judgements that were more generous than the evidence suggested. In both cases, the need for significant improvement was evident in the text but not the judgement given.
 - b. six reports contained an overall judgement on the quality of the school, contrary to requirements, for example:
 - i. School A "provides a good quality of education for its pupils." (Also, in this school the judgement for behaviour was separated from that of personal development and welfare – giving five judgements).
 - ii. School B "is a remarkable school."
 - iii. "The result is a school (C) that is very successful in all aspects of its work, and outstanding in some."
 - iv. School D "is a good school, which promotes pupils' personal development particularly well."
 - v. School E "is a good school with some outstanding features."
 - vi. School F "is a good school with many outstanding features."
53. One report contained a grade for achievement in the summary but not in the main section. Another contained a discrepancy in reporting on achievement in nursery and reception between the summary and the main body of the report; one states 'outstanding' progress the other 'very good'.
54. It is plainly difficult for lead reviewers to introduce their reports without an evaluative impression of the school. Hence adjectives such as 'remarkable' (without quite explaining why), 'happy', 'safe and caring' or 'excellent' learning environment, 'calm and well ordered' and 'delightful' are used to capture quality of the school when Ofsted-style descriptors are avoided.
55. Another more thoughtful approach is to comment on how well the school reflects its core values. There is something to be said for starting from what the school stands for. Many reports avoid this dilemma simply by reporting, from summary onwards, in terms of the four areas in which judgements are required. These reports are compliant with the Handbook but do not

allow the lead reviewer licence to give an overview of the school. We feel it should be possible to comment on the uniqueness of each school and how well it meets its aspirations without invoking 'official' grade descriptors that would encourage ranking of the schools.

56. In the majority of reports the quality of writing was clear, grammatical and coherent. In one or two, there was a mismatch between text and judgement. Some lapsed into vague evaluations, such as describing progress as 'solid' or qualifying judgements with 'generally'. Reports are noticeably more readable when the lead reviewer is less constrained by the constricting writing style used in many inspections in England.

Clarity and strength of recommendations

57. All the reports have constructive recommendations although these vary significantly in number, organisation, clarity and manageability for schools. For example, some reports contain a small number of recommendations with sub actions identified beneath which are clear and prioritised, whilst others contain up to 14 recommendations that are not grouped or prioritised in any way. For example:

- a. in two cases the recommendations did not cover what needed to be done as indicated in the main body of the report:
 - i. three recommendations – but nothing in relation to leadership and management such as narrowing the gap for Jersey Premium or SEN pupils, school improvement planning or expectations as indicated in body of report
 - ii. four commendations – but nothing in relation to systems to gather and analyse progress data as indicated in the body of the report
- b. in another, the lack of aspiration in one recommendation must be questionable: 'Make sure all teaching is securely good and **occasionally** outstanding by ...'

58. Although the majority of reports fulfilled the specification, the examples above suggest that quality assurance could be enhanced to ensure that all reports are checked for consistency and moderated against the specification before being sent out as a draft to schools. We suggest the following specific improvements to reporting (some of which have been included in the earlier Recommendations).

- Continue to provide training on the agreed report format to minimise inconsistencies in reports.
- Ensure that the judgements made accurately represent the evidence gathered and presented in the main body of the text.
- Ensure that there are no overall judgements on the school, such as those used by inspectorates in England and other jurisdictions.
- Ensure clear and specific guidance is provided on how recommendations are to be structured to ensure that these are manageable and most helpful for schools.
- Enhance quality assurance to ensure that all reports are moderated against the specification before being sent out as a draft to schools.
- Ensure that the composition of the review team is accurately reported in the report.
- Consider providing training in feeding back to teachers.

5. Impact on School Improvement

59. The introduction and implementation of the JSR approach is impacting on schools and their improvement in several distinct ways, for example, through:

- a. providing all who work in education with a comprehensive tool for guiding and benchmarking their work in the form of the JSR Framework
 - b. training leaders in school evaluation and giving them direct experience of practising this skill under expert supervision
 - c. giving teachers the experience of having their classes observed independently, with access to feedback
 - d. identifying the strengths of schools and aspects that need improvement
 - e. informing follow-up to reviews and subsequent school improvement planning
 - f. promoting school self-evaluation
 - g. establishing a common professional language for school improvement across the system
 - h. raising aspirations of schools in which aspects are not yet of the highest quality
 - i. providing a basis and methodology for other more specific enquiries, such as the Jersey Curriculum Review and focus on the effectiveness of teaching.
 - j. providing the CYPES Education Directorate with baseline information about the quality of education in its schools and the achievements, development and wellbeing of the children and young people who attend them. The review system provides indispensable information for managing and improving the school system in Jersey.
60. The development of the Framework and circulation of the JSR handbook has been welcomed by schools and advisers. It is commonly regarded as ‘a useful resource, regularly used in school’ or ‘helpful in providing the fine detail to help create the bigger picture’.
61. Reviews are followed up by the senior adviser for the school. Senior advisers are each linked with relatively few schools so should be able readily to provide – or commission from a colleague or another school – the expert support and challenge that schools may need in implementing key recommendations. Lead reviewers question whether some senior advisers they have worked with have encountered elsewhere the models of excellence needed to raise schools’ sights and stimulate aspects judged to be less than outstanding. One suggestion is that the deployment of a transforming advisory headteacher from off-island would be an asset to any schools requiring significant improvement in the next round of reviews.
62. Some primary schools have engaged in partnership working with other schools, forming pairs, clusters or networks and developing learning communities both within and across schools. This has the potential to facilitate school improvement providing the collaboration is challenging as well as supportive. There are indications that a more systematic approach to collaboration at both primary and secondary level and across additional resource centres would be beneficial. Lead reviewers considered that these centres should be reviewed along with their host schools.
63. There must be greater concern about provision for secondary-age students where, with one or two exceptions, there is little sign of a culture of collaboration across the secondary headteachers. If secondary schools cannot share leadership development and specialist expertise, it will be difficult to move forward without turning to off-island support. Links with exceptional off-island schools, would be beneficial in raising the ambitions and aspirations of Jersey schools and show what outstanding schools elsewhere look like.
64. The need for greater alignment and more joined-up support from across the Education Directorate is voiced by a number of schools, not all of them secondary. Several headteachers assert that the inclusion team “is not listening to issues in schools” and that staffing issues and requests are dealt with far too slowly on the human resource (HR) side. It ought to be possible for link senior advisers to facilitate the resolution of such concerns and for work at the centre to

tackle the perceptions that some teams work in silos, better to support schools and the children they serve.

Examples of the Jersey Schools Review as a catalyst for improvement

65. A rounded picture of impact can be seen in the example of one primary school for which the review prompted the following activity.

“We updated the self-evaluation but encouraged staff not to over-prepare. The lead reviewer from off-island understood the Jersey context and had good knowledge of the handbook. The team covered a lot of the school through observations, work scrutiny etc. and offered feedback to staff who had been observed for 15 minutes or more; most chose to accept this. The recommendations were very helpful. The school had already embarked on the journey to improve the effectiveness of middle leaders, so this external verification was useful. The review aided the team-building process; it brought the school together” (Primary headteacher).

66. In another, quite challenging school, the review was very useful to the new headteacher, who felt that the school – which “had operated an excuse culture” – would not have moved forward so quickly without the review. The school’s immediate response included staff observing each other’s lessons and identifying positive aspects. The departure of some staff paved the way for rebuilding middle leadership. The headteacher was clear that external evaluation had helped convince the staff that change was necessary; without the review, the school would not have moved forward so quickly.
67. A secondary headteacher felt that introducing reviews had been “a very positive step for the Island.” Before being reviewed, the school had used the framework numerous times for internal verification and included in the school improvement plan key areas identified through the framework. The headteacher was able to work alongside the lead reviewer in their own school, counting this as excellent professional development. There was continuous dialogue throughout the review and leaders received “the best possible advice on how to move the school forward.”
68. The review is reported to have “provided confirmation and validation of our direction of travel and given staff the confidence that leadership knew what they were doing.” Subsequently all the senior leaders in that school have reviewed their areas against the framework. Reports have been produced and the findings fed into departmental development plans. The review dovetailed into the school’s internal self-evaluation, improvement planning and appraisal processes.
69. The publication of the JSR Framework can itself have a positive impact on school improvement. One primary school, for example, “undertook lots of work in leading and monitoring subjects and writing the school development plan using the review framework, basing all the key priorities on criteria for ‘outstanding’ and including a clear focus on the evidence needed to demonstrate progress.” The post-review action plan then fed into a revised school development plan. As one headteacher explained:-

“The review framework is now part of what the school does cyclically. It dovetails with the SDP, SEF and performance management and ensures greater consistency. The curriculum is evaluated constantly, and we are always looking for new ways to improve.”

70. The reviews can result in establishing ‘School Support Boards’ for schools that require significant improvement in one or more areas. The boards can be a catalyst for improvement, particularly

in the primary sector, but secondary schools voiced negative views about the efficacy of these boards, partly because they did not trigger the resources that secondary schools felt were necessary. The periodic return of off-island lead reviewers to support the improvement of least effective schools is welcomed by those schools that have asked for and received such support. Support from carefully selected off-island headteachers with expertise in school transformation would also be a worthwhile investment. Currently some schools take the initiative to seek out off-island partners, but these tend to be people known to them, not necessarily those who could provide most help.

71. The Jersey Schools Review system has also identified the need, paved the way and provided methodology for other thematic reviews of provision across schools. One excellent example was the Primary Jersey Curriculum Survey designed by a lead reviewer and undertaken by senior advisers and external consultants in autumn 2018. The findings revealed that pupils only received their full entitlement to the Jersey curriculum in a small proportion of schools. The recommendations have led to an Island-wide implementation plan.

6. Contribution to the Government's ambition for children

72. The Government's commitment to children having the best start, achieving the best outcomes and fulfilling their potential can only be realised by an ambitious and effective school system with excellent teaching and aspirational leadership. There is evidence that school reviews and the better use of data are important levers in raising expectations and challenging under-performance.
73. As one witness explained: "The collection and use of data, teacher assessments and testing, has been a major area of development as a means of challenging low expectations and the culture of 'what can you expect from these children?' The review together with the off-island expertise has greatly raised expectations. At primary level, schools are now seeing the benefits of using both teacher assessment and KS2 tests, leading to higher expectations and comparisons with England. Jersey Premium has now been in place for two years, raising the profile of individual groups. This has been furthered by the review. Previously EAL was synonymous with SEND; the review has challenged this view. The review has been successful at identifying groups of pupils, highlighting their needs and Jersey are responding in terms of differentiated funding, support and training."
74. There is evidence that the JSR approach is a very cost-effective way of reviewing schools in order to inform and drive improvement. The costs of peer reviewers involved in the pilot were absorbed by the system, with the review experience providing participative, high quality professional development for school leaders. Securing effective follow-up should ensure improvement and result, over time, in improving educational outcomes for all. To this end, the Government of Jersey should consider appropriate investment in the JSRF and the follow-up school improvement work, following the success of this pilot. There is little question that the reviews provide good value for money. Consideration might be given to sharing the JSRF with the education service in the other Channel Islands, and further afield, with the benefits of sharing practice and the potential of revenue.
75. The conditions for maximising the conduct and impact of the reviews were set out in our recommendations earlier. We stress that all parts of the system need to work together to ensure that review outcomes are consolidated and the full benefits secured. Reviews should continue,

and reviews in the next cycle should be able to report on improvements, school by school, since the last review.

Evaluation methodology

76. The consultants, Peter Matthews Associates Limited have extensive experience of evaluating educational programmes and systems both in the UK and internationally. The approach to evaluation was broadly based on experience of OECD country studies as well as policy and programme evaluation in the UK. Rita Bugler and Dr Peter Matthews OBE are former civil servants with experience of leading major government projects before engaging in evaluation and research consultancy. Peter is also visiting professor at the UCL Institute of Education and a former senior HMI.
77. The evaluation was undertaken in three phases: preparation, a field visit, and the analysis and reporting phase. Preparation included discussions with the Group Director of Education and the advance review of documents which included the Jersey Schools Evaluation Handbooks, a paper on The Jersey Schools Review System, analyses of review outcomes and copies of all 40 internal reports of the pilot school reviews undertaken in 2016-2018.
78. The field visit occupied four days in the States of Jersey in May 2019 during which time visits were made to two secondary and five primary schools. Individual or group meetings were held with:
 - primary headteachers
 - secondary headteachers
 - primary and secondary teachers
 - advisers and senior advisers
 - the Group Director of Education
 - the Director of Standards and Achievement
 - off-Island lead reviewers (telephone interviews).
79. Access was also provided to further documents and data including: government policies and plans, the updated Jersey Schools Review Handbook, the pilot JSR reports of schools, a survey of teachers about their reviews, analysis of review outcomes, performance data and example of pre-review briefings.
80. The authors are most grateful to: Seán O'Regan, Group Director of Education; David Berry, Director of Standards and Achievement; all those in the service of education in Jersey, and four of the external lead reviewers, who gave their time, information and frank views in contributing to this evaluation of the Jersey Schools Review system. We particularly appreciate the good-humoured efficiency of Tracy Cox who facilitated our work.