

Grainville School

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Children, Young People, Education and Skills
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Headteacher: Mrs S Morris
Review date: 28–30 January 2020

Summary

- This is a well led school. Senior and middle leaders work with passion, commitment and a real focus on achieving positive outcomes for students and ensuring everyone’s welfare and safety.
- The parental and staff questionnaires indicate high levels of satisfaction with the work of the school. Students also like their school.
- The majority of the teaching is effective. Because of this students achieve well in many subject areas. There is variation in the quality of teaching, however. This means that not all students, or particular groups of students, make good progress in a few key areas.
- Teachers and support staff understand what is required of them to meet leaders’ high expectations. Leaders ensure that a wide range of checks and balances provide important information on how reliably school policies are enacted. In some cases, teachers need to concentrate more on how much difference to students’ achievement their work brings about, to inform next steps more clearly.
- The conduct of the great majority of students is very good. Many are positive, mature and respectful. The great majority have well thought-through and positive attitudes to issues such as diversity and equality. Students generally have a well-founded sense of pride in themselves and in their school. The behaviour of a small number is very challenging, but there are systems in place to manage this.
- Pastoral provision is strong. Staff are caring and often ‘go the extra mile’ to support students. Health and safety and child protection procedures are watertight.

Full report

Achievement

- Students' learning is secure in most subjects. In some it is good or outstanding.
- Overall measures of progress across students' five years at the school point to many achieving outcomes broadly in line with expectations based on their achievement and their potential at the end of Year 6. There are some particular strengths, including in the proportion of students achieving a standard or good pass in both GCSE English and mathematics.
- Students make very good progress in some subjects, for example in photography, business studies, art and design, and modern foreign languages.
- Students' achievements in a minority of other subjects, especially in science, are an area of concern for the school. There are plans in place to bring about improvements in these areas.
- Groups of students have achieved several significant awards over recent years, including winning all of the awards in the 2019 Jersey Business Challenge.
- Leaders rightly attach importance to the development of literacy. Reading is assessed regularly. Good schemes have been chosen and they are used well. In this case, the data obtained from regular testing is used to steer next steps for groups and individuals and to inform the overall strategy.
- Many students with special educational needs make sound progress in developing their academic and social skills. A good proportion who left school last year progressed to further education or training. However, the checks on which strategies are having the most impact are underdeveloped.
- Some students, all of whom have special needs associated with the autism spectrum, are supported in the Additional Resource Centre (ARC). They spend most of their time in mainstream lessons which, for many, represents good progress. Their learning is often secure and, when teachers adapt the work for them, they do well. Several use the ARC at lunch and break times to relax between learning.
- Many students who are eligible for the Jersey Premium and those who speak English as an additional language make better progress than some of their peers in similar Jersey schools.
- A small number of students are educated elsewhere to supplement their learning. Some benefit from the Jersey Young People Provision recently established, from following courses at Highlands College and from work placements. This provision is supporting learning for these students, despite the challenges some face.

Behaviour, personal development and welfare

- When asked to identify one 'stand out' aspect of the work of the school, a group of Year 11 students unhesitatingly identified the quality of the care and the support they receive here. The responses to the parent questionnaire around the quality of care provided by the school are similarly very positive.
- Strong, well-run pastoral systems are carefully combined with high levels of approachability and timely responses. There are pastoral leaders for every year group and tutors are often a first port-of-call for students who have worries or concerns.
- Students' conduct at break and lunchtimes is good. They move around the site happily and treat each other with respect and thoughtfulness. Several members of the review team witnessed acts of kindness between students in lessons, for example when a friend was helped with a piece of work or quietly offered some supportive words.
- Behaviour in lessons is good. The few instances of off-task behaviour seen during the review came about due to a lack of challenge in the teaching. The students concerned did not set out to disrupt others' learning.
- Students' attitudes to learning are generally very positive. However, some students do not always participate with enough determination to support good or outstanding learning. They remain quiet and quite passive, at times, instead of questioning, discussing and thinking deeply about the lesson.
- Students describe bullying as rare. Instances tend to be isolated acts of thoughtlessness, or the ebb and flow of friendships, rather than being premeditated or long-term. Nevertheless, staff take them seriously and students are pleased with the effectiveness of this support.
- Students are fiercely proud of the extent to which diversity is valued across the school. Those from different social, religious and ethnic backgrounds are valued and respected equally and there is a range of practical strategies in place to tackle discrimination, including a LGBTQ+ group. They appreciate the support of staff and the strong positive culture that an effective and well-delivered programme of personal, social and health education has brought about.
- A very wide range of activities beyond the classroom for students to enjoy supports good levels of personal development and provides for the good social, moral, spiritual and cultural development of students here. These include many sporting activities, the Duke of Edinburgh Award Programme, the Eisteddfod, outward-bound team building and various positions of responsibility available, including being a prefect and being a student senior leader. Many activities involve important contributions to the local community. Rates of participation are good and the participation of students with special educational needs is particularly high. The great majority of parents who responded to the questionnaire were very pleased with this provision.
- Fixed-term exclusion affects around one in ten students at some point. This is comparable to the average across similar schools in Jersey. Leaders use the sanction appropriately and as a last resort. They have plans in place to reduce the number and length of these exclusions, and there are signs of success so far this year. The 3–6 School initiative is a helpful part of their strategy. The REP (Relationships, Engagement, Progress) room is also a good place for some students to have 'time out'.

- Students with special educational needs appreciate the support they receive. They feel valued alongside their peers. However, the rates of exclusion of students with special educational needs are higher than for others, which is similar to other schools. Leaders are working to address this.
- Attendance is better than the average across similar schools in Jersey. Senior staff value good attendance and have identified ways of improving it in their planning.

Effectiveness of teaching

- There is a proportion of teaching in the school that is good to outstanding. Many students learn well and enjoy lessons when the teaching is this good.
- In general, teachers' subject knowledge is strong. The best teaching capitalises on students' positive attitudes and willingness to learn by actively involving them in their learning. This is seen most clearly in some practical subjects, for example in music, drama and dance where teachers skilfully blend challenge and support by encouraging students to think through and begin to apply new learning for themselves. In a childcare lesson, a well-led and interesting discussion promoted strong learning.
- The most effective teaching almost always happens when teachers have a crystal-clear view of the essential point of the lesson, which is then communicated to students plainly. Students told the review team that they like it when they can 'see the big picture' of their learning.
- While there is very little teaching that does not support at least fair progress, the proportion that promotes strong learning, as described above, is not yet high enough in a few subjects. There is inconsistency in the quality of students' learning within a few departments than senior leaders are comfortable with.
- The quality of teaching in science is rightly a key focus for senior leaders. They are now responding to the need for teaching to be driving better progress in all year groups in this subject.
- Many teachers follow the marking policy and require students to respond to the feedback offered. Some excellent practice that supported strong progress was seen in art and design and technology. In English some teachers used re-drafting well to deepen learning. However, there is inconsistency in the impact of marking and feedback across, and occasionally within, departments. Not all teachers identify precise 'next steps'; some do not make sure that students act on advice. This is a key priority of the School Improvement Plan.
- In some lessons, teachers adapt the work to suit the needs of different groups of learners. When this doesn't happen some students struggle and do not make good enough progress. Sometimes teachers' planning does not include close enough reference to these students' targets and their next steps in learning.
- Teaching assistants generally offer good quality support for students in lessons.
- Students appreciate the care and support they obtain from their teachers, recognise that they want the best for them and value the positive working relationships between adults and students.

Effectiveness of leadership and management

- Leaders have put in place good systems to enable every child to learn well, to be safe and to be happy here. There is a well-founded sense of pride throughout the school around the extent to which this vision is realised in practice. This was reflected in the responses to the staff survey.
- Leaders remain ambitious. Self-evaluation processes capture strengths accurately and also correctly identify areas of the school's work that can be even better. The development plan sets out leaders' plans for improvement in a clear, well organised and coherent manner.
- The range of checks leaders have in place to gauge the consistency and the reliability of this improvement work is impressive. Information about each aspect of the work of the school is brought together regularly throughout the year in formal meetings. In this way, leaders have developed a healthy culture of accountability. They know how all staff are contributing to the school's development.
- For example, leaders have a range of good quality information about the progress of students in each year group across all subjects. Leaders visit lessons regularly to gauge the quality of students' learning and the impact of the teaching. This gives them a good overview of progress and enables them to offer appropriate challenge and support to departments and to key staff. A stronger focus on the quality of learning of key groups, such as students with special educational needs, would help leaders to target intervention and support even more effectively.
- The quality of teaching is managed carefully. There is currently an emphasis on whole-school training opportunities and the development of generic teaching skills. Senior staff are sensibly considering giving more responsibility to departments to develop teaching in each particular subject, beginning with those subject leaders who are already ensuring a good quality of learning for students.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. In some subjects, such as science, leaders have decided to move to a new approach from September 2020 that should promote improvements.
- Occasionally there is an over-emphasis on the importance of everyone's compliance with the school's systems and procedures, rather than focus on the difference to students' outcomes that these bring about.
- All aspects of safeguarding are effective. There are good procedures in place to ensure that checks are in place on adults that work with children. There is a strong culture of the early identification of, and rapid response to, any child protection or welfare issues that arise. Safeguarding is rightly regarded as a collective responsibility. The current building work is being very well managed with the contractors. As a result, students are safe and well cared for.
- A new model of governance was introduced a year ago. Each governor is now linked to a specific aspect of the school's work and they share their findings in meetings so that everyone has a good overall understanding of the school's work. Leaders are interested in exploring the implications of these developments for improving accountability and thereby raising standards.

- Home-school links are well developed. A significant majority of parents who responded to the survey felt well informed about how well their child is doing. The school achieved the Leading Parent Partnership Award in 2019.

Recommendations

The school should take the following actions.

1. Improve the quality of students' learning in science by:
 - ensuring that subject staff are supported to broaden and deepen their teaching skills
 - planning carefully for the delivery of the new curriculum model to ensure coherence, pace and challenge in every students' experience.
2. Ensure consistency in teaching by:
 - making sure that all feedback offered to students on their work
 - is timely in order to sustain reliably good standards
 - recognises existing strengths and gives clear guidance around areas for improvement
 - is acted upon by students
 - building in more opportunities for students to play an active role in lessons, including discussing ideas and asking questions of each other and the teacher, so that they can enjoy broadening and deepening their understanding of the work
 - ensuring that all lesson planning and delivery is the consequence of teachers having a precise grasp of the learning that is to be promoted, and how this is best achieved.
3. Refine the ways in which leaders and managers use the existing effective systems and plans to drive improvement by focusing more on their desired and actual impact on the students' learning and wellbeing.

Information about the school

Age range of students:	11-16
Gender of students:	Mixed
Number of students on the school roll:	713

Grainville school is a Government of Jersey non-fee-paying school that welcomes students of all abilities and backgrounds. It draws students from rural settings, including St John, St Martin and Trinity as well as the urban catchment of St Helier. The number of students on roll is expected to rise over the next few years. There is currently a building programme underway to replace outdated classrooms. This is expected to be completed by summer 2021.

Information about the review

- The work of every teacher who was in school during the review was seen. Some teachers were visited more than once because they teach in more than one department. The work of teaching assistants was also observed.
- A large sample of students' work was scrutinised.
- Several meetings were held with school leaders at various levels.
- The school's published assessment data were analysed.
- Discussions were held with groups of students in each year group about their learning and progress, and the ways in which the school ensures their safety and wellbeing.
- A small sample of students read to reviewers and discussed their reading.
- Students' behaviour and attitudes were observed during break times and as they moved around the school.
- A tour was made of the school's site to check its security and safety.
- A wide range of documents was considered.
- The review took into account the results of surveys of the views of parents and staff about various aspects of the school's work.

The review team

The review team consisted of eight reviewers and was led by an experienced off-island consultant. The other reviewers included two other experienced off-island consultants, a senior adviser and an education adviser from the Department for Children, Young People, Education and Skills, and two senior teachers working on the island, one from another school and the other from the college.