



Jersey Schools Review Framework

Independent report of

First Tower Primary School

La Route de St Aubin

St Helier

Jersey

JE2 3SD

Headteacher: Mrs L. Linton

Review date: 3 - 5 February 2026

Summary

First Tower is an improving school which has come a long way in the last few years. The school rightly prides itself on its inclusive and nurturing ethos. In the face of protracted staffing challenges, school leaders have remained resilient and have understandably focused on prioritising improvements to the reading, writing and mathematics curriculum. As a result, pupils' achievement in these subjects has improved and is now in line with that found in other Jersey schools.

However, planning across the whole curriculum is at an early stage. The development of some subjects has faltered because of staff turnover and challenges of recruitment. Senior leaders are outward-looking and have invested significantly in training, initiatives to improve behaviour and resources to support the curriculum. However, not all initiatives have been monitored closely enough to check whether new approaches are having the desired impact.

Many teachers adapt schemes of work to match what their pupils already know, understand and can do. In these cases, leaders and teachers are crystal clear about what they want pupils to learn. However, some staff need further support to maintain high expectations and meet the needs of all the pupils they teach.

An area of real strength in the school is the early years. Children in the Nursery and Reception get off to a flying start in a busy, welcoming and delightful environment. They play and learn with enthusiasm, developing a strong sense of self and sociability through a well-planned and inspiring curriculum.

Most pupils conduct themselves in a calm and orderly manner around the school and have positive attitudes to learning. They are friendly and most try hard. However, a few older pupils do not concentrate as well in lessons as they should and sometimes overly boisterous behaviour at lunchtime is not appropriate.

The school is strongly inclusive, and specialist staff are dedicated to ensuring that pupils are supported with their emotions, anxieties and challenges in a mainstream environment. However, a small number of staff, parents and pupils express concern about the way that individual incidents of dysregulated behaviour are managed. Not all members of the school community are committed to the school's ideals of an inclusive environment.

Contextual information

- First Tower School is a two-form-entry school for pupils aged 3-11, with a 40 place Nursery.
- 41% of pupils are eligible for Jersey Premium, which is a larger proportion than found in most Jersey schools.
- 45% of pupils are multi-lingual learners, which is a much larger proportion than found in other Jersey schools.
- The proportion of pupils with special education needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is lower than in other Jersey schools.
- The school has two nurture provisions, catering for those pupils who have social, emotional and mental health needs.
- The school was last reviewed in November 2019.

Information about the review

The Jersey School Review Framework (JSRF) was launched in 2018. Following a pause during the COVID-19 pandemic, reviews continued from September 2022. The first cycle of school reviews was completed for all Government of Jersey schools by July 2024. The framework was updated from January 2025. This particular review was conducted, and its report written, under this updated framework.

- Reviewers evaluated the curriculum, teaching and learning through sampling these subjects: reading; writing; personal, social and health education (PSHE) including citizenship; mathematics and physical education. For each subject, the reviewers discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited lessons where possible, talked to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. They also listened to some pupils read to a familiar adult.
- Reviewers visited the school's nurture provision.
- A range of documentation was scrutinised, including curriculum planning, behaviour and attendance information and provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).
- Safeguarding arrangements were reviewed, including safer recruitment procedures and records of child protection concerns.
- Reviewers had formal and informal discussions with groups of pupils and met with leaders, teachers and support staff. The school's published performance information, planning documents and policies were scrutinised in order to review pupils' progress and the quality of the curriculum.
- The views of parents, staff and pupils were gathered through informal discussions and analysing the responses to surveys conducted explicitly for this review.
- Pupils' behaviour was observed in and out of lessons, including at break and lunchtime.

Full report

Curriculum, teaching and learning

- The early years curriculum is motivating and inspiring for children in the Nursery and Reception. Children's imaginations, skills and knowledge are developed strongly through a language-rich environment, attention to detail and responsive play and teaching.
- The youngest children develop reading, writing and mathematical skills through secure phonics teaching, exposure to enticing literature and access to a wealth of practical activities. As a result, pupils, including those who speak English as an additional language and those with SEND, are prepared well for Year 1.
- In general, phonics and early reading are taught effectively, and most pupils are confident about using their sounds when reading aloud. Leaders have revamped reading material for pupils to practise, and the books selected match the sounds pupils are learning. Further up the school, the reading curriculum has been revised to include quality texts for class study, discussion and writing tasks – all of which is giving pupils a better experience of literature than they previously had.
- The school's focus on improving pupils' writing has also borne fruit with pupils gaining more confidence with different genres of writing, spelling and grammar. In general, pupils take care of their books and present their work as neatly as they can. Most pupils show commitment to improving their work with editing activities and redrafting part of their routine.
- Pupils' enjoyment of and confidence in mathematics are testament to the school's work to improve programmes of study and teachers' subject knowledge. Staff are increasingly adept at using concrete apparatus to enhance number and geometrical concepts with all pupils, including those with SEND and the most able.
- Some subject areas are at a very early stage of development, so pupils' overall experience is not as aspirational as it could be. Stronger planning and teaching are evident in subjects such as PSHE and physical education, which are subjects appreciated by pupils. These subjects are organised in a logical sequence and build up pupils' skills and knowledge incrementally.
- Leaders have invested in commercial plans for particular topics or areas for learning. While this supports teachers' workload, not all teachers adapt existing plans to meet the needs of pupils. Assessment of pupils' learning is not consistently used well to inform planning. Learning is more successful when teachers take full account of what their pupils already know and can do – as well as when teachers know exactly what pupils need to learn next.
- Leaders and most staff are committed to including pupils with SEND and ensuring that they are learning effectively alongside their peers. Many pupils benefit from the extra support and expertise of experienced and committed learning support assistants. However, not all support staff are confident in their roles and are not sure about how to be an effective classroom practitioner and provide meaningful support for pupils with SEND.
- The school's development of pupils' oracy, critical thinking and confidence when answering questions and talking about ideas is at an early stage. In some cases, teachers deliberately plan structured opportunities for pupils to express their views, but in some cases, pupils do not know how to use their voice in this way and opportunities are lost.

- The school's nurture provision provides a safe haven and in most cases, an effective stepping stone for learning in the mainstream classroom. Staff have benefited from training in neurodiversity, and many feel confident in their understanding of how to support pupils' social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs. A range of different therapeutic approaches help some pupils to regulate their emotions. However, not enough thought has been given to developing programmes of study to help these pupils achieve well and feel a true sense of belonging.

Behaviour, attitudes and attendance

- In Nursery and Reception children's positive attitudes to learning and self-discipline are fostered early on by expert staff. Children have frequent reminders of the school's values: 'we respect, we learn, we persevere' which quickly become second nature to them. As they progress through the school, most pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to learning, courtesy and respect. At their best, pupils are lively and enthusiastic: they clearly want to please, try hard with tasks and are visibly proud of what they are learning.
- The school is usually a calm and orderly environment. Most pupils conduct themselves safely and sensibly in unstructured times. However, a few older pupils are in the habit of overly physical behaviour at break and lunchtime which is not always challenged firmly enough by staff.
- Instances of deliberate bullying are rare and are managed effectively. When name-calling and derogatory and discriminatory language is reported, it is picked up quickly and dealt with firmly and fairly.
- School leaders recently launched a revised positive relationships policy, following an increase in serious incidents and suspensions for a small number of pupils with particular needs. However, it is still early days and leaders have not yet made the most of the system to analyse patterns of inappropriate conduct and support all staff with maintaining the highest expectations. Some pupils waste time in lessons and their lack of effort in lessons is not challenged rigorously enough.
- A small number of pupils have particularly complex additional needs which can lead to over-anxiety and dysregulated behaviours. Recent incidents have caused some parents, a few members of staff and pupils to express concerns. Some staff feel isolated or worried that pupils' distress and frustration are too hard to manage. There is still some way to go to ensure that the whole school community is on board with the school's nurturing ethos.
- Most pupils attend well, with figures for all groups of pupils being in line with those across Jersey in general. Leaders take a holistic approach when attendance drops and combine challenge and support for families in order to encourage better attendance. Leaders can point to individual successes where pupils' attendance has markedly improved. Pupils are expected to be punctual and timekeeping is monitored carefully.

Personal development

- Right from the start, children in the early years are encouraged to develop positive relationships and unique identity through play and the stimulating environment. Children quickly gain a sense of their own place in the world and appreciation of the environment. They learn about self-control, taking turns and keeping themselves active and physically

healthy. Their experience provides a secure foundation for their character when they move into Key Stage 1.

- Overall, the school is a welcoming and diverse community in which leaders and staff make sure that different cultures, religions and backgrounds are represented. Pupils learn about each other's different beliefs and traditions through the PSHE curriculum, enrichment activities and assemblies.
- Regular celebrations and island events mark the school calendar, enabling pupils to learn about Jersey history and culture. Pupils enjoy participating in the Christmas carol service in the local church, putting on Nativity plays and entering Island-wide competitions. In addition, staff ensure that pupils have opportunities to broaden pupils' horizons to the world beyond the Island. Many make the most of their talents and commitment to sports and team games, competing and succeeding in league competitions.
- All pupils, including those with SEND, are encouraged to participate in enrichment activities, such as charity work, trips and visits. Additional programmes of visitors, such as the local fire service, enhance the curriculum and the daily routine. Leaders regard participation rates positively, although the proportions of pupils regularly taking part in sports or cultural enrichment are not tracked.
- Pupils enjoy collecting reward points and accumulating certificates in celebration assemblies. Pupils told reviewers that they are pleased to be rewarded for their own consistently positive conduct and participation under the school's new system.
- Elections to the school council provide pupils with a taste of democracy and responsibility for decisions about school life. Older pupils very much enjoy their duties as playground friends and supporters for the younger children. Many pupils appreciate the quieter spaces provided for them where they can socialise and play games with their friends at lunchtime.
- The recently developed PSHE programme focuses on pupils' sense of self, identity and healthy relationships. Further development is needed to fully enact the school's response to the 'Violence against women and girls' (VAWG) taskforce report. Nevertheless, girls in the school told reviewers that they felt confident and strong and that they were treated respectfully and with equality.
- Most pupils regard the school as a safe and secure place and know that staff are there to look after and listen to them. However, a small number of pupils worry when individual pupils become distressed and dysregulated because they do not understand the circumstances.

Leadership and management

- Leaders are justifiably proud of how far the school has come on its journey of improvement. However, more needs to be implemented to get all staff and parents on board with the school's overarching aims. Subject leadership is at a very early stage and planning in some subjects is underdeveloped.
- Leaders know the school well, but at times have been frustrated by the challenges of the context, environment and staff changes. Considerable investment has been made in professional development and developing expertise to enhance staff's confidence, especially those who are new to teaching or to the school. However, in spite of the undoubted challenges, leaders have not monitored the fundamental principles of

teaching, learning and expectations rigorously enough in order to know what's working and what steps to take next.

- Leaders are supportive role models, but their work with pupils who have complex special educational needs is not wholly understood by all staff in spite of leaders' efforts to support wellbeing and workload. Leaders do not always achieve the right balance between supporting staff and ensuring that they are all upholding the school's values, work ethic and expectations.
- The school's provision for pupils with SEND, including the nurture spaces, is characterised by staff expertise at senior, teacher and support staff level. Additional funding and support for particular groups, including those pupils who are eligible for Jersey Premium and those who speak English as an additional language is used effectively to ensure equity and equality of opportunity.
- Leaders look outwards and have forged informal partnerships with local schools, which are likely to be helpful and supportive, in addition to strong links with successful schools in the UK. Leaders have worked effectively to welcome families from overseas and ensure that pupils settle in well.
- Safeguarding is effective. The safeguarding team is another example of how expertise, compassion, relationships, leadership commitment and systematic oversight create security and a positive culture. Safeguarding leads know pupils and families well and work effectively with outside agencies to ensure that pupils are cared for.
- Staff know what to do if they are concerned about a pupil and know that they will be listened to and their concerns followed up promptly. Pupils report that they have trusted adults to speak to if they are worried. The safeguarding team maintain accurate and comprehensive records of concerns that trace chronologies,. These records are overseen and tracked to identify any patterns.
- Pre-recruitment checks are carried out in line with Jersey requirements and appropriate records are maintained and checked regularly.

Notable strengths

The school has notable strengths in the following areas:

- the overall experience of children in the early years area, including its motivating curriculum, positive relationships and well-planned learning environment
- expertise in providing a nurturing environment for pupils with particularly complex special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The review team recommend that the school seeks to share its learning and strengths in these areas with other schools on-Island.

Recommendations

The review team recommend that the school should take the following actions:

1. Improve pupils' overall experience of the curriculum by:
 - ensuring the curriculum in all subjects is ambitious and aspirational for all pupils, including those with SEND
 - making sure that teachers take full account of what pupils already know, understand and can do when planning learning
 - providing progressive pathways for pupils with the most complex special educational needs to help them learn and achieve
 - support all staff with developing pupils' confidence when expressing their ideas orally.

2. Improve the effective management of pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning by:
 - insisting upon high expectations of conduct and motivation for all pupils in all classes
 - insisting upon safe and well-ordered play and conduct in the playground
 - ensuring that staff feel fully supported during and after managing challenging incidents when pupils with SEND become dysregulated.

3. Improve the impact of leadership and management by:
 - systematically monitoring the implementation and impact of initiatives, policies and procedures
 - enabling subject leaders to take full responsibility for developing their subject areas and monitoring implementation
 - holding all staff firmly to account for the quality of their work and upholding the school's inclusive values.

Information about the school

Age range of pupils: 3 –11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

Number of pupils on the school roll: 332

Headteacher: Mrs L. Linton

School telephone number: 01534 721066

School website: www.firsttower.sch.je

Information about the review team

Jersey School Reviews take place over three days. The size and specialist experience of each review team reflects the size and the context of the school

This review was led by an experienced off-Island school inspector/reviewer and consisted of a total of four reviewers. The team included two other experienced off-Island team inspectors/reviewers and one senior leader from another school who has been trained as a reviewer.

Enquiries about this report should be addressed to the Head of School Review and Inspection, Government of Jersey, Floor 2 Union Street, St Helier, Jersey JE2 3DN.