



Jersey Schools Review Framework – Independent Report of Grouville Primary School

La Rue de la Haye de Puits
Grouville
Jersey
JE3 9DL

Headteacher: Mrs Nichola Turner
Review date: 20-22 June 2023

Summary

'Always be the best you can be'. This is the school's new mission statement. Pupils, staff and leaders alike try very hard, and with notable success, to live up to this standard. An ambitious approach, a well thought-out and regularly refreshed curriculum, and effective teaching, mean that pupils do well. In terms of basic skills, pupils develop firm foundations for the next stages of their education. But Grouville offers so much more; this school is highly successful in promoting a breadth and depth of personal skills, qualities and attributes. Pupils are rightfully and understandably proud of their achievements and school.

The school rules of 'be responsible, respectful and safe' are known and lived by pupils. The school is a long-established gold-level 'Rights Respecting School'. Adults regularly seek pupils' views and contributions. Their opinions matter. Pupils' welfare, well-being and achievement are at the heart of everything the school does.

No time is wasted as children settle and quickly start to blossom in the impressive early years. Reading, and fostering a love of books, are a prominent feature of daily life right from the start. Attractive displays and well-stocked shelves of books adorn the school's shared areas throughout. Across subjects, pupils usually try their very best. They keenly take on board the school's 'successful learners ingredients' and show enthusiasm and commitment towards their work. Pupils become impressively adept at working both independently and collaboratively with each other. On a few occasions, teachers could do even more to use these positive skills and attributes to further enhance pupils' learning and progress.

Leaders and staff are determined that every child will succeed. Leaders keep a close check on whether Jersey Premium pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are getting the support they need to do at least as well as their peers. Leaders and staff continually work hard to improve the school. They know that they are still on the journey towards making sure that every single pupil benefits from the very best curriculum and teaching. They are determined to keep the school heading in that direction.

Staff recognise that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. They work well together to ensure that all pupils are kept safe from harm. The rights of the child are central to the school's approach and at the forefront of all practice.

Full report

Achievement

- Children get their schooling off to the best possible start in early years. They quickly begin to flourish as they rapidly develop a wealth of foundational skills and knowledge across all areas of learning. Nursery children are readied extremely well for the Reception classes. In turn, by the end of the summer, Reception children are usually more than capable of taking the transition to Year 1 in their stride. While cohorts vary, the proportions reaching the early learning goals typically compare very favourably with Jersey averages, often exceeding them.
- The culture of reading in the school is strong. Not satisfied that the school's teaching of early reading was previously as strong as it could be, leaders introduced a new phonics scheme from September 2022. There has been strong investment in both resources and staff training for the new scheme. Early signs of its positive impact on standards and how well and quickly pupils learn to read are very promising.
- Reading has a high profile across the school. There is an ongoing programme of investment in the attractive and increasingly well-stocked libraries. Most pupils have very positive attitudes to reading. They are enthusiastic about the frequent opportunities to read throughout the week. Pupils learn to read with increasing fluency and expression, confidently using successful strategies to decode unfamiliar words. Many make good use of the school's variety of inviting spaces to sit and read during independent times.
- Pupils learn well and make good progress across a range of subjects. They build an array of secure knowledge, for example about properties of different materials in science, the 'Amazing Americas' in geography, or the significance of Boudica in history. They also develop an understanding of each subject as a discipline, for example what it means to 'work scientifically' or use artefacts to learn about history. Pupils readily make links with what they have learned before because of the strengths in both the curriculum and teaching.
- Leaders and staff are ambitious about the standards pupils have the potential to reach. Leaders keep a very careful track of how well pupils are doing across the curriculum. They know that there are still some variations between different groups and subjects. Leaders analyse this information in lots of different and useful ways with a focus on identifying where pupils could be doing better so that extra help can be given.
- Leaders keep a close check on whether pupils eligible for the Jersey Premium and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are getting the support they need to do at least as well as their peers. Over time, pupils eligible for the Jersey Premium have tended to lag behind others in terms of attainment. However, leaders continue to work effectively and systematically to tackle these differences. There are very few multi-lingual learners at an early stage of learning English, but these pupils are supported well.
- Leaders are alert to unidentified SEND within their ongoing scrutiny. Interventions and other additional help and support for pupils is carefully planned and appropriate. As a result, pupils with SEND, and others who need extra help, make good progress overcoming their barriers to learning.
- Although historic achievement data has shown a slightly mixed picture over previous years, by Year 6, pupils are well equipped to move on the next stage of education. By the time they leave, pupils have secured a broad knowledge base across a wide range of subjects. They have also developed a strong understanding of how to work independently and think for themselves, for example tackling mathematics challenges

where they have to explore and make their own decisions rather than just follow a particular process. Year 6 pupils relish these sort of challenges.

Behaviour, personal development and welfare

- Grouville has been a Gold Rights Respecting School for four years, recently being recredited. This notable achievement reflects the school's strong commitment to promoting children's rights, pupil participation and pupil voice. This ethos runs deeply through all aspects of school life.
- Pupils' well-being is central to the school's approach. Pupils trust the staff and are confident that they will help them if they have any difficulty or concern. There is a strong emphasis on different aspects of positive relationships, safety and health, both physical and mental. Pupils' love and enjoyment of school is reflected in how little of it they miss. Attendance figures are above Jersey averages and continue to improve.
- A range of universal and targeted strategies are deployed to promote positive mental health. The school holds half-termly 'Well-being Wednesdays'. For those who need additional support, the school employs a school counsellor and has trained some support staff as emotional literacy support assistants (ELSAs). Staff also work closely with outside agencies and professionals where appropriate and necessary, including Mind Jersey, Woman's Refuge and primary mental health workers.
- Pupils are confident and proud of their achievements and school. They convey strikingly positive attitudes. Many display a real hunger for learning. Year 6 pupils spoke of how sad they will be to shortly leave the school and of their wishes that the school had a secondary department.
- The school's 'successful learners ingredients' encourage pupils to take responsibility for their learning and most rise to this challenge, particularly where teaching allows these dispositions to flourish. Pupils become increasingly skilful at working collaboratively with each other. This often goes beyond respectful cooperation to a genuine instinct to look out for, and support, each other.
- Through carefully planned personal, social and health education (PSHE), the school equips pupils well to understand and appreciate themselves and the diverse world around them. Leaders and staff take care to adapt the PSHE curriculum to meet the school's and pupils' own particular needs and contexts.
- In the main, staff take pupils' personal needs into account and plan proactively for these. Pupils with SEND benefit from suitably tailored approaches that enable them to access the same education as their peers, to which they are entitled. The school's success in supporting particular mental health and wellbeing needs leads to notably strong progress in these areas and successes can clearly be seen. Leaders and staff employ thoughtful strategies to support pupils with transitions to different classes or stages of education.
- Promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong. There are many ways in which pupils can share their views and contribute to the life of the school, building their sense of citizenship and community. These include the rights respecting team, school and class councils, and the eco-active team. Every pupil in Years 1 to 6 is part of at least one 'pupil voice' group. A broad variety of extra-curricular clubs are on offer from football to first aid and gardening to bell ringing.
- The school is proactive in preventing bullying and incidents are rare. The school takes any concerns from pupils or parents seriously, exploring and investigating what the issues are. There is no complacency here. Leaders continue to strive to gain the confidence of the very few members of the school community who still have doubts in this area.

Effectiveness of teaching

- Teachers have secure subject knowledge and suitable understanding of the subjects they teach. Right across the school, their expectations are usually high and they are determined that children and pupils will achieve well.
- The school's helpful teaching, learning and assessment handbook supports the effective practice that is becoming increasingly established across the school. It sets out clearly leaders' expectations of teaching, and teachers usually adhere to it well.
- Teachers prioritise carefully checking pupils' understanding throughout lessons. They are alert to opportunities to identify and respond to any possible misconceptions. This prompt feedback and intervention is helpful in reshaping tasks and explanations, as well as challenging pupils who grasp new concepts quickly to go deeper.
- Teachers' use of questions is effective. They draw on a broad repertoire of questioning types and techniques. Depending on what teachers want to achieve, sometimes their questions are very targeted and precise. At other times, they ask broader, more open-ended questions to really probe pupils' thinking.
- Although ably supported by the SEND coordinator, teachers also take responsibility for pupils with SEND in their own classes. They work in close partnership with a skilled team of teaching assistants. Together, adults thoughtfully tailor provision so that pupils they support are helped to keep up with peers wherever possible. Staff are insightful about individual needs and effective in the strategies and support they give. Support for pupils with additional needs is often deployed discretely and always in a considered way. Information technology is often employed as a helpful mechanism to enable pupils with SEND to access the same learning as their peers.
- Additional interventions, designed to help pupils do better when in their daily lessons, are carefully planned, focused and effectively taught. Leaders are not afraid to identify where things are not working and adapt. There are strong systems in place to measure the impact of this additional, time-limited support.
- In early years, the rich and stimulating environment bursts with opportunities for children to learn and explore. As a result, even the youngest children demonstrate exceptional levels of sustained engagement. Effective staff training has ensured that adults understand their role when children are exploring and choosing their own activities. Every chance is seized to maximise the learning while following the interests of the child.
- Throughout the school, teachers seek appropriate opportunities to enrich pupils' learning, including through visits to celebrate Jersey's culture and identity, and learn about this and the world beyond.
- Supported by the curriculum and the work of the subject leaders, planning for pupils to build on previous learning and towards what is coming next is generally secure. Occasionally in lessons, the intended learning becomes lost. Sometimes this is because pupils' tasks, or the way that the lesson is delivered, do not help pupils to focus on the most important things.
- Teachers prepare carefully for their lessons. They give pupils helpful examples of 'what a good one looks like' or 'WAGOLLS'. Often teachers make sure that these visual images are clear and uncluttered which is helpful for all pupils, especially those with SEND. However, in a few cases, the text and/or images on these examples are too small for pupils to easily see, so their impact is lessened.
- Most teachers make optimal use of lesson time, keeping pupils engaged, busy and productive. Occasionally, the amount of time pupils spend listening to the teacher rather than being more active participants in the lesson causes a few to switch off. For some pupils, opportunities to practise and really consolidate what they are learning are also restricted in this way.

Effectiveness of leadership and management

- Leaders and staff work tirelessly to develop what is on offer for pupils and further improve the school. Leaders' approach to this work is systematic and thorough. They prioritise the right things for improvement that will make the biggest difference. Most staff strongly agree that they are proud to work at Grouville.
- There is no sense of complacency. Rather, leaders engage in a continuous, ongoing cycle of self-evaluation and school improvement planning. They keep a close check on the impact of their actions and review and update their improvement plans accordingly. They are not afraid to change course for the right reasons, including if strategies do not work as intended. Leaders welcome external validation and/or critiques of the school's work, responding positively to and acting on the feedback that this brings.
- Wisely in this large school, senior leaders utilise the experience and knowledge that exists throughout staff team. They have grown and harnessed leadership capacity across the school. There is a suitably strong focus on subject curriculums and subject leadership as a vehicle to raising the quality of achievement in the school.
- This is a school that values a rich and broad curriculum and ensures that foundation subjects (those beyond the core subjects of English, mathematics and science) have sufficient emphasis. Leaders are rightfully adamant that this is pupils' entitlement. Dedicated leadership time for foundation subjects is well established. Subject leaders make an increasingly strong contribution and are an integral part of the improvements that the school has secured. Crucially, leaders share a strong understanding of what needs to be done next in each subject to continue to improve.
- Promoting equality and celebrating diversity runs strongly through the school's ethos. As a result, pupils develop an increasingly sensitive and mature understanding and appreciation of a rich world of difference in their immediate community and beyond.
- Leaders realise the significant value of continuing professional development for staff and this is suitably prioritised. These opportunities, together with performance review and appraisal, link closely with school improvement priorities. There is also a degree of flexibility that allows for personal and individual professional needs and interests to be addressed.
- Systems and processes to identify, plan and review provision for pupils with SEND are robust. Leaders work closely with external experts and agencies as needed, buying in additional provision where possible to enhance the existing allocation. Individual pupil documentation and plans are comprehensive and useful.
- Excellent leadership of the early years provision is reflected in the highly effective realisation of a clear vision. This vision, and the determination to get these formative years spot on for children, are firmly grounded in a depth of knowledge about the very best early years practice.
- Most parents express positive views about the school. They are unanimous that the school makes them aware what their children will learn and that the school encourages children to be independent and get on with others. Only a few parents expressed any areas of dissatisfaction, and there were very few common themes among those that did. Most had positive feedback, with many praising the caring nature of the school and describing how their children are thriving.
- Safeguarding procedures at Grouville are comprehensive and robust. This results in an environment where children feel safe and, as a result, flourish. Staff take appropriate actions to identify pupils who may be at risk, report concerns and support their needs.

Designated leads for safeguarding are knowledgeable and act quickly to minimise risk of harm.

Recommendations

The school should take the following actions:

1. Continue the ongoing work to develop the curriculum, bringing even greater clarity to the most important learning for pupils to acquire and ensuring that teachers design lessons and tasks that are most likely to be effective in bringing that learning about.
2. Further reduce remaining variations in the effectiveness of teaching to support even better achievement by ensuring existing best practice is spread. In particular:
 - make sure that all teachers are crystal clear in each lesson about pupils' prior learning, what they need to teach now and what is coming next, so that pupils' learning builds and lasts over time.
 - help every teacher in the school to make the best use of time in lessons and maximise the benefits of pupils' strong learning behaviours as many already do
 - give pupils in all classes enough time to practise and consolidate what they are learning
 - check that images and models used for teaching, including on interactive whiteboards and flipcharts, are clear, easy to see and accessible to all.

Information about the school

Age range of pupils: 3–11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

Number of pupils on the school roll: 395

Headteacher: Nichola Turner

School telephone number: 01534 851089

School website: www.grouville.sch.je

Contextual information

- The proportion of pupils eligible for Jersey Premium has risen in recent years and currently included just over one-quarter of all pupils.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is 14%.
- The early years consists of a nursery and two Reception classes.

Information about the review

The review team visited lessons across all year groups. The range of subjects where direct teaching was observed included English, mathematics, science, history, geography and religious education. Reviewers looked at work and/or spoke with pupils across the full range of subjects.

As well as speaking with children and pupils of all ages during lessons and at lunchtime, reviewers met separately with small groups of pupils from Years 2, 3, 4 and 6. They also listened to pupils reading in Years 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6. The Year 5 residential trip was taking place during the review, but reviewers visited two of their lessons on day 2.

The review team met with leaders and staff. They reviewed a range of policy documents and records relating to the way the school is led and managed, pupils' achievement, SEND, teaching, behaviour, welfare and safeguarding. Reviewers took account of 100 review surveys returned by parents as well as 39 completed by a range of staff.

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.