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## Jersey Schools Review Framework – Independent Report of Mont Nicolle Primary School

La Route des Genets  
St Brelade  
Jersey  
JE3 8DE

Headteacher: Lisa Paul  
Review date: 17-19 January 2023

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### Summary

Mont Nicolle is a lovely school centred around its pupils. The school provides a calm purposeful, learning environment in which pupils are happy, feel safe and listened to. One parent expressed a view that was echoed by many when stating that ‘they felt very privileged to have their children educated at Mont Nicolle’.

Pupils love being at this school. This is reflected in their demeanour and high levels of attendance. The behaviour of pupils is exemplary. Pupils demonstrate a secure understanding of what it means to be healthy and how to keep themselves safe. Staff here promote pupils’ personal development well. This together with pupils’ positive attitudes to learning and the support of parents and specialists makes a strong contribution to pupils’ achievements.

The headteacher and deputy headteacher provide strong leadership. They share a clear vision for the school and high aspirations of what pupils, as well as staff, are expected to achieve. Aspects of leadership such as for the early years, safeguarding, special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), attendance and for supporting the development of Early Career Teachers are highly commendable.

Provision for children in the early years is exemplary. Examples of strong teaching and learning were observed across the school. Lessons typically build on prior learning. When provided with opportunities to work collaboratively, pupils demonstrate particularly high levels of engagement. However, the effectiveness of teaching across the school and implementation of the curriculum is variable. Assessment, both at the point of teaching and in the feedback given to pupils in their workbooks are key areas for development. Although most pupils achieve well, they should and could be excelling.

Leaders and managers would benefit from reviewing the school’s long-term and medium-term plans for subjects across the curriculum and ensuring that the curriculum is being implemented consistently well. The majority of staff rightly recognise the school is improving. Senior leaders know they need to revise the school development plan and for this to be done with staff. They are also planning to develop the role of subject leaders and middle managers to better support members of staff who lack confidence in some aspects of the curriculum.

# Full report

## Achievement

- Attainment on entry to the school in the early years, is typically above what would normally be expected. As children progress through the Nursery and Reception years their learning and development are strong.
- The proportion of children achieving early learning goals is higher than in most schools. This includes in all the areas of learning, prime and specific areas. Particular strengths include; children's attainment and learning about the natural world, developing self-regulation, and managing themselves. Children also achieve well in gross motor skills.
- In Reception, children were observed making rapid progress in phonics when being taught in class. However, only three quarters of pupils in Year 1 achieved well in their study of phonics last year. Pupils' current progress in phonics varies between different teaching groups.
- Last year more pupils than in most schools in Years 2, 4 and 6 achieved in line with expectations for their age in reading and mathematics. Throughout the school, most pupils, including those with SEND and multilingual learners (MLL) make expected progress.
- Pupils enjoy reading books in school and at home; key texts used for reading are now being used effectively to support many pupils with their writing.
- The achievement of pupils in writing is not as strong as it is in reading and mathematics. Pupils eligible for the Jersey Premium currently lag behind the rest of their class in some year groups. Currently, the progress that pupils make in developing their spelling as well as their knowledge and skills in writing and in some other subject areas, is variable across the school.
- The changes introduced to the teaching of mathematics is currently leading to some strong and effective practice with the vast majority of pupils including pupils with SEND, MLL and those eligible for the Jersey Premium making improved progress in the subject.
- Pupils' science workbooks demonstrate that, pupils can make predictions, reason, and produce some extended writing. There is clear progression through the year groups.
- From work seen in workbooks and from discussions with pupils, it is clear that their learning in humanities is developing well. Pupils can confidently identify specific points in history and can talk about continents and countries.
- By the end of Year 6, the vast majority of pupils achieved well in French.
- Senior leaders have developed strong and effective system to moderate teachers' assessments to help ensure greater accuracy of teachers' judgements.
- By the end of key stage 2, most pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Pupils with high prior attainment are not always challenged sufficiently. This limits the progress that they make over time. In discussion with pupils, when asked what the school could do better for them, their main response was 'to provide harder work'.

## Behaviour, personal development, and welfare

- The behaviour of pupils in lessons and around the school is exemplary.
- The school's clear policy for behaviour management is consistently applied by staff. Developing and maintaining positive relationships with pupils and parents are at the heart of the behaviour policy and the school's practice.

- Pupils value the rewards earned including visits to the headteacher, postcards home and special certificate assemblies.
- Pupils demonstrate a strong moral compass that reflects the school's values. Pupils respond quickly to instructions and are often seen being kind and courteous to each other as well as to adults.
- Staff value the support they receive from senior leaders should any issues regarding behaviour arise.
- Pupils' social and moral development equips them extremely well to becoming thoughtful, caring, and active citizens in school and in the wider society. Pupils help to raise money for a range of worthy causes, such as supporting Ukrainian families and other causes linked to the environment.
- Pupils care for the environment and access to forest school activities help them to develop a healthy knowledge, respect as well as sense of awe and wonder of the natural world. This contributes well to pupils' spiritual development.
- The well-chosen PSHE curriculum prepares pupils well for their future, such as learning about the importance and value of respect and the meaning of democracy. Pupils learn how to be healthy, stay safe and manage emotions very effectively. Lessons in PSHE help to raise and maintain pupils' self-esteem. This has had a very positive impact on Jersey Premium pupils.
- Some staff are not clear about the amount of time that should be spent teaching PSHE and currently there is no tracking of the progress that pupils make. These are areas that leaders recognise need addressing.
- Pupils love taking part in the 'Let's Get Cooking' programme. These sessions teach pupils about what constitutes a healthy and well-balanced meal. Pupils learn about food from a range of cultures. The activities also contribute to pupils developing their understanding of weights and measures when preparing ingredients for a recipe.
- A specialist in religious education (RE) supports the delivery of RE in a way that provides immersive experiences for learners around different cultures and faiths. This allows pupils to reflect on their own beliefs and that of others.
- The curriculum for social, moral, spiritual, and cultural (SMSC) development is appropriately planned in line with the Jersey Curriculum. The new coordinator has rightly identified appropriate priorities and next steps for further improvement.
- The school provides a range of exciting extra-curricular activities. These include sport related activities as well as pupils learning how to create animations.
- Curriculum visits including to the War Tunnels and States Chamber help to foster in pupils an understanding and appreciation of the Island's heritage.
- Displays around the school and assemblies help to celebrate diversity.

## **Effectiveness of teaching**

- Examples of strong teaching and learning were observed across the school. This included in English, mathematics and in some phonics lessons. Pupils clearly benefit from the effective teaching of reading, art and from having access to after-school clubs and a range of exciting curriculum activities.
- According to pupils, they enjoy their learning in English, mathematics, religious education, geography, and dance. One pupil spoke for many when they said, 'we love learning'.
- In the most effective lessons, such as in the early years, children were provided with activities that led to squeals of excitement and irresistible learning. In other year groups

where teaching was particularly effective, teachers demonstrated secure subject knowledge and high expectations of their pupils. The effective use of questioning helped pupils to think more deeply about their learning. In the most effective lessons, teachers modelled new learning well and provided pupils with opportunities to share and discuss their work as well as sufficient time for pupils to complete their work. Successful lessons built effectively on previous learning and provided pupils with the strategies to be successful when working independently. This included pupils with SEN.

- Some exemplary practice was observed by key workers for example, supporting those pupils with a Record of Need and a few pupils that are Jersey Premium.
- However, the quality of teaching and support is variable across the school and the curriculum. This includes in the teaching and learning of phonics. Teaching and support staff do not always encourage pupils to use and apply their phonics skills to read and write new and unfamiliar words.
- Where teaching is less effective, staff typically did not possess the knowledge needed to fully support pupils in developing their knowledge, understanding or skills. In a very small proportion of lessons, new learning was modelled incorrectly.
- Pupils typically complete the same work as each other with insufficient evidence of those pupils capable of achieving more being provided with appropriate challenge.
- Not all staff are checking that pupils understand what is expected of them. A minority of teachers do not use assessment effectively enough to pick up on those pupils that have not grasped new concepts or are ready for more challenge. Sometimes pupils develop misconceptions that are not picked up by teachers.
- On a few occasions, lessons were not well structured and at times moved from one concept to the next causing pupils to become confused. At times, visual aids were not used well enough to help pupils to understand unfamiliar concepts.
- Across the school, feedback given to pupils is inconsistent. In humanities, English and mathematics teachers rarely identify clear next steps so that pupils know what to do to improve their learning. Spelling mistakes are all too often left uncorrected, leading to pupils repeating and reinforcing errors.
- There are too few opportunities for pupils to record their mathematical reasoning.

## **Effectiveness of leadership and management**

- A significant number of parents commented on the extent to which they appreciate the support, commitment, and passion of the headteacher. Senior leaders know the school extremely well and have a clear view of strengths and areas for development. This is reflected in the school's self-evaluation document.
- The leadership of attendance is superb, and the leadership of early years is exemplary. There is also strong leadership of mathematics, safeguarding and special educational needs.
- The in-depth knowledge and experience of the special educational needs coordinators ensures that pupils' needs are identified early and are addressed effectively through a range of assessments and well-chosen interventions.
- Relationships between the school, parents and the local community are a strength.
- The views of parents and pupils are actively sought. This contributes to effective partnership working with the child being at the centre. The school takes pride in its mantra of being a 'listening school' so that pupils are encouraged to raise any concerns they may have.

- Almost all pupils with SEND are able to access the same work as their peers with appropriate scaffolds and support, as necessary.
- Senior leaders undertake rigorous monitoring and provide staff with feedback about what they are doing well and what they could do better.
- There is a secure culture of safeguarding in the school. Staff have received training and updates about keeping children safe in education. Staff also receive annual refresher training about protecting pupils from the risk of radicalisation. The caretaker takes pride in the school environment and demonstrates a proactive approach to site safety.
- Pupils state with confidence, that they feel safe in school; they can clearly articulate ways in which they are helped to stay safe.
- Senior leaders ensure that pupils are provided with a broad and balanced curriculum. However, leaders acknowledge that more work is needed in developing the curriculum for design and technology as well as computing. They also recognise the need to ensure greater consistency in the implementation of the curriculum.
- The curriculum is enhanced by a suitable range of extracurricular activities. Provision for activities before the school day begins, include a breakfast club. Such activities encourage pupils to come to school in the morning.
- Displays around the school as well as the range of books on display in the school library, highlight the school's commitment to promoting equality of opportunity. Leaders ensure that pupils learn about celebrating, valuing, and respecting differences.
- Most staff are of the view that their workload and well-being are well managed.
- The previous strategy for Jersey Premium pupils was not sufficiently effective to ensure that this group of pupils progressed as well as their peers. This is currently under review by senior leaders to ensure that additional funding is used more productively and effectively so that all Jersey Premium pupils make better progress this year.
- The role of middle managers remains underdeveloped and too few staff have come forward to take on additional roles and responsibilities.
- The school development plan needs to be revised and for this to be done alongside staff. The revised plan will need to include interim targets against which progress can be checked and measured.

## Recommendations

The school should take the following actions:

1. Ensuring more consistently effective teaching so that all pupils are enabled to make even better progress in their learning by:
  - assessing pupils' learning, understanding and progress, at the point of teaching, to identify more rapidly those capable of more challenge and those in need of additional support
  - providing pupils with feedback that identifies what they have done well and clear next steps to further improve their learning; then encouraging them to respond to this feedback
  - ensuring that the incorrect spelling of key vocabulary across the curriculum is picked more rapidly, and providing more opportunities for pupils to write across the curriculum
  - ensuring teachers swiftly identify misconceptions and gaps in pupils' learning to enable pupils to make better progress
  - encouraging pupils to develop their written reasoning skills in mathematics
  - ensuring the teaching of phonics is always of a high standard

- developing the questioning skills of some teachers so that they promote pupils' deeper learning and understanding.
2. Improve the consistency with which the curriculum is implemented across the school by:
    - reviewing long and medium-term planning with staff to help them all to plan high quality daily lessons for all subjects
    - ensure better guidance for those subjects currently not sufficiently well covered such as design and technology
    - develop the role of subject leaders so they are better able to support members of staff who lack confidence in what they should be teaching and how they should be teaching it
    - develop a cycle of monitoring over time so that the quality and effectiveness with which the curriculum is being implemented can be checked, and improvement targets set as appropriate.
  3. Further improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
    - growing and developing more middle leaders to support the work of school improvement
    - revising the school's development plan with staff. This is to help them to develop a greater sense of ownership of what needs to improve and why, and to help them to develop their understanding of how they can contribute to helping the school to improve further.

## Information about the school

**Age range of pupils: 3-11**  
**Gender of pupils: Mixed**  
**Number of pupils on the school roll: 214**  
**Headteacher: Lisa Paul**  
**School telephone number: 01534 744992**  
**School website: [www.monnicolle.sch.je](http://www.monnicolle.sch.je)**

## Contextual information

- 12% of pupils are eligible for Jersey Premium
- The Nursery includes a large area for children to learn and play in a child centred and safe environment.
- 5% of pupils are on the school's special educational needs register.
- There is no specialist on-site provision for SEND.
- None of the pupils attend alternative provision.
- The school does not have a governing body.

## **Information about the review**

The range of review activities included discussions with senior leaders and staff; discussions with groups of pupils, observations of pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school including in the playground; reviewing a sample of workbooks for English, mathematics, and some humanities subjects; listening to a sample of pupils reading and reviewing a range of school related documentation.

Nineteen lessons were visited in total. This included eight visits undertaken jointly by two peer reviewers and two visits undertaken jointly between the lead reviewer and the headteacher.

## **The review team**

The review team consisted of four reviewers. The review was led by an experienced off-island consultant

Enquiries about this report should be addressed to Head of School Improvement & Advisory Service, Children, Young People, Education and Skills, Highlands Campus, PO Box 142, St Saviour, Jersey JE4 8QJ.