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## Jersey Schools Review Framework – Independent Report of Bel Royal School

La Rue De Haut  
St Lawrence  
Jersey JE3 1JQ

Headteacher: Claire Hammond

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### Summary

Standards in reading, writing, mathematics, and French have risen over the last few years at Bel Royal. The school is a happy place, where pupils feel welcome and included, whatever their needs or abilities. Good care is taken to promote their welfare, safety, and personal development. Pupils are beginning to have the chance to help in the running of the school in various ways and are responding well to this. Behaviour is mainly good, despite lapses in concentration during some teaching.

The Additional Resource Centre (ARC) offers effective support for pupils with a wide range of physical and learning needs so that they make good progress from their starting points. The Nursery and Reception classes also offer good learning. Here, the introduction of a new programme for teaching letter sounds, and a strong emphasis on language development are very effective. This is particularly helpful for children whose home language is not English. The outdoor facilities for the Reception pupils need improvement to boost learning opportunities.

There are examples of very effective teaching throughout the school. The most effective teaching has high expectations which lead to good achievement. This teaching makes good use of question-and-answer work, so helping staff to assess understanding and correct misconceptions. However, overall teaching effectiveness varies too widely between classes and the subjects taught. Pupils do not learn sufficient detail about a number of subjects, including content about Jersey. They often have too few opportunities to write independently because worksheets are over-used. Weaknesses in spelling are not picked up and corrected in a number of subjects.

During and after the COVID-19 pandemic, Bel Royal suffered significant disruption through illness and absence of both pupils and staff. There have been a number of changes of leadership over the last three years. Leaders at different levels have taken strong steps to improve the school. Some of these are beginning to work well. However, more work, including staff training, are needed to bring about the full impact intended. There are still some significant weaknesses in the overall design of the curriculum for key stages 1 and 2, and in a number of plans for subjects. These limit pupils' achievement.

Senior staff know the school's main strengths and weaknesses accurately, although not all shortcomings have been picked up.

Planning for improvement would be more effective with clearer statements about what is to be achieved and the precise steps required to do so. Staff show enthusiasm to continue and

succeed with school improvement processes.

## Full report

### Achievement

- Standards in reading, writing, mathematics, and French have been rising at Bel Royal. Over the last few years assessed achievement has often been close to, or occasionally better than, the average of other Jersey schools.
- The achievement of current pupils varies too widely between subjects and classes.
- Pupils in key stage 2 often read well and with expression, using books of good quality. Their comprehension is sometimes less secure. New approaches to the teaching of phonics (letter sounds), reading, and aspects of writing, are making a good impact for pupils in Years 1 and 2, and in the early years. The work is taught systematically, and pupils make very good progress.
- Writing across key stages 1 and 2 is largely based on a study of children's literature of good quality. In some classes there are examples of writing of a good standard, but pupils frequently have insufficient opportunity to write at length, both in English and other subjects. As a result, skills, and stamina for writing are often not as high as they should be.
- In mathematics, work is usually pitched well for pupils' ages. Opportunities for pupils to tackle problems and find ways of working out answers are developing well. Some pupils are trained to explain their thinking out loud. This helps teachers and their working partners to resolve any misunderstandings. Pupils often get too little practice at carrying out calculations. In some parts of the school essential facts for addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division are not memorised well enough. As a result, pupils' calculations are sometimes slow and laborious.
- In science, some elements of good and appropriate work are tackled, and some pupils show good understanding. As in other curriculum subjects, work for science is not well enough planned. Unsatisfactory coverage of the statutory curriculum, including the requirement to work scientifically, limits pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding. The over use of worksheets constrains skills of observation, recording, description and analysis. Worksheets are overused in several other subjects, with similar effects.
- A new programme for Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) has been introduced. This is already leading to good learning about health and wellbeing, relationships, and living in the wider world. Pupils are beginning to understand aspects of citizenship, for instance through the formation of a school council.
- French for older pupils has led to good achievement. In other subjects in key stages 1 and 2, achievement varies with the quality and range of the work taught. Some work leads to very good learning. However, weak curriculum design and planning mean the requirements of the Jersey Curriculum are not fully met; pupils generally do not learn all they should.
- Pupils eligible to receive the Jersey Premium funding sometimes receive extra help, but their average progress remains somewhat slower than other pupils.
- Children in Nursery and Reception, often make good or very good progress. Children who are multi lingual learners (MLL) benefit from the good quality of spoken language and storytelling which surrounds them. Children make good progress with communication and language, and mathematical development. In aspects of their physical development, particularly the use of fingers and hands for drawing and early writing, they do well. Children learn to work positively with each other and take responsibility for looking after equipment. They are beginning to learn about some varied traditions and beliefs. Shortcomings with the current outdoor spaces constrain opportunities to build strength, balance and coordination and other aspects of learning.
- Pupils attending the ARC have a wide range of physical and learning needs. For some, achievement is measured in terms of developing social skills and independence, as well

as academic skills. Staff ensure that these pupils achieve very well in relation to their starting points. They are learning to follow routines, take turns and listen to others in a group discussion. Some are learning to master early reading, writing and numeracy skills, while others use signing, symbols, and pictures to communicate their views. Pupils attending the ARC make faster progress because small gains are noted, and suitable targets set so they are able to move on to the next steps in their learning.

## **Behaviour, personal development and welfare**

- Pupils conduct themselves well when they enter or leave the school or move around the building. The school is generally calm, orderly, and well regulated.
- Behaviour in classrooms in key stages 1 and 2 varies with the effectiveness of teaching. Often, pupils are interested and engaged; they generally respond readily to instructions. However, in a few cases where teaching is less engaging or there are in-class distractions, there is some inattention and lack of involvement. There are few episodes of significant misbehaviour; any incidents are followed through to resolution by staff. Staff interventions in pupils' disputes and disagreements are sensitive and effective. Pupils say restorative approaches are encouraged; they value their use and seek to put things right.
- Attendance is broadly in line with Jersey averages, but not as high as it was before the disruption caused by COVID-19. There is little evidence of unpunctuality.
- Pupils are proud to be members of the school. They say they feel happy and safe. Pupils helped develop the statement of values: *include, believe, achieve*, and they enjoy receiving rewards for demonstrating them in school. Pupils have a strong understanding of inclusion and say, 'Nobody is left out at Bel Royal.'
- Newly introduced work for PSHE is popular with pupils. They feel it helps them with relationships and accepting more responsibility as they grow up. Pupils are good at recognising and responding sympathetically to others who have differing needs.
- As a result of the best teaching, pupils are enabled to ask and answer questions, and express opinions; they are respectful of each other and listen well. However, these important aspects of personal development are not always evident.
- In the Nursery and Reception classes, children respond well; high expectations and sensitive relationships with teachers and teaching assistants develop understanding of the ways to play and work well together. Children show good care for equipment and the environment.
- Pupils educated through the ARC enjoy their learning and are keen to tackle difficulties. This is because of the trusting and respectful relationships between staff and pupils. Pupils respond well to teachers and teaching assistants, who have a good understanding of their individual needs, and manage any anxious behaviour sensitively. The pupils are included appropriately in wider school activities alongside their peers, for example in swimming and trips out. They benefit in varying degrees from working in year group classes. Most gain from developing awareness of a larger group and joining in with, or alongside, their peers. A small number struggle to maintain concentration for extended periods of time.
- The welfare and well-being of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are very well supported through close links with other agencies and professionals. Visiting therapists ensure that the language, physical and medical needs of pupils are well met. Staff have had appropriate training in, for example, manual handling and delivering intimate care, where needed.
- Multi lingual pupils, including those whose home language is not English, say that they feel welcome at Bel Royal. They are happy at the school and feel their needs are understood by staff and other pupils, who seek to help them. The school is in the process of refining its assessment of differing levels of need among MLL pupils. Existing help and support is undoubtedly successful, particularly in the early years provision.

## **Effectiveness of teaching**

- The most effective teaching is well planned and skilful. This teaching involves clear explanations and demonstrations, and asking questions which get pupils to think, express opinions and explain their ideas. Teachers listen carefully and adjust their teaching to clarify what has been said or to correct misunderstandings. Some work seen, for instance in mathematics, is carefully sequenced to deepen knowledge, understanding and skills. Here, pupils pay good attention and show good participation in work of different kinds. Some pupils show good recall and understanding of work in geography and science, indicating that their teaching has made a good impact.
- In the Nursery and Reception classes, expectations are consistently high. Teaching develops skills and independence. Classroom routines are well established, so activities operate efficiently. Notable strengths of the teaching in these classes is the quality of talk, which gives children strong encouragement to think things through and to discuss ideas at length. The focus given to getting children to use ambitious vocabulary is impressive. Consistent use of language about behaviour helps pupils to understand the effect of their actions.
- Teaching in the ARC is highly effective because staff have high expectations and are determined that pupils achieve their best. Thorough planning ensures all pupils can learn and contribute, either through reading or signing and pointing to express their views. Lessons are well-paced which helps pupils maintain concentration. For example, after a period of focussed learning, pupils might break for a short session of physical activity. Resources are used imaginatively to aid access for all pupils, including the use of action songs, pictures, symbols, signing and information and communication technology. Staff encourage pupils to stay on task, for instance by using praise or drawing attention to those following instructions appropriately.
- Teaching and support staff typically have a high level of knowledge of the needs of pupils with SEND and the strategies that will help them learn. Support in both the ARC and the year group classes is pitched at the right level to promote pupils' independence. Teaching assistants often make effective contributions during activities and offer good support to pupils with a variety of needs.
- Despite good examples of effective teaching in various parts of the school, there is too much variability. Some teaching is unclear and fails to hold the attention of pupils. New schemes for English and mathematics, whilst making valuable contributions to learning, do not offer adequate opportunities for practice. Pupils in some parts of the school are not taught to memorise key mathematical facts, and this makes mathematical calculations inefficient. Feedback is often given to pupils during work, and this is valuable. However, there is too little feedback and oversight of work in several other subjects; misspelling of key words is often not picked up and pupils' errors are allowed to persist. Too many worksheets are used. These limit opportunities for personal writing and other forms of recording across the curriculum. Weaknesses in the curriculum impact negatively on the effectiveness and impact of teachers' work.
- Improvements are required to make teaching more consistently effective. Encouragingly, staff show great willingness to continue to improve and some effective training is being offered.

## **Effectiveness of leadership and management**

- There have been a number of leadership changes in the last few years. Members of the current leadership team show good awareness of strengths and weaknesses in the

school as a whole, and in aspects of the subjects for which they have responsibility. In several cases, leaders have clear and direct plans to bring about further improvement.

- Senior leaders are consolidating their evaluation of the school and their plans for future development. In the past, not all issues affecting teaching, learning and the curriculum have been identified clearly enough. The newest evaluation documents are well-founded. However, plans would benefit from more precise indications of what must be achieved, and the steps to be taken to ensure this happens.
- The school's leadership has built and maintained a happy and inclusive ethos, where pupils are valued and often very well supported. One pupil said, 'It doesn't matter who you are, people make you feel welcome and help you if you don't understand everything.' The provision for pupils with SEND is very well led, and successful. The leadership for early years has introduced innovative approaches, which tackle previous shortcomings and now lead to much good progress for the children.
- Schemes for the teaching of phonics for younger pupils, and for PSHE for the school as a whole, have been introduced effectively, and are meeting with success. These areas are generally popular with the pupils, who appreciate their impact on learning.
- The school had not previously had tight enough planning for the work to be taught in key stages 1 and 2. New plans, mainly based on commercial schemes, have been introduced. Those for mathematics and English require more training to ensure teachers all understand and implement the methodologies fully. For a number of other subjects, the plans adopted are unsatisfactory; they often lead to superficial work and weak coverage of the statutory curriculum, including learning about aspects of Jersey. Once the more substantial schemes for English and mathematics are fully implemented, better structuring and planning of the rest of the curriculum must be a priority.
- The school makes provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Of these, moral and social development are reasonably strong, but more attention needs to be given to other aspects.
- The physical environment of the school is conducive to learning and the ample space available offers a calm atmosphere. The outdoor play area for Reception is limited, and in poor condition. It is therefore underused. Improvement is needed here.
- This is an inclusive school where pupils show good understanding of different needs; all are made to feel welcome and at home. Any misbehaviour or potential safeguarding issues are well managed.
- The school's safeguarding arrangements are given high priority. Pupils report that staff are caring, supportive and could be approached proactively to solve any problems. Suitable arrangements are made for pupils who are non-verbal to make disclosures if necessary.
- Checks on potentially vulnerable children are systematic and well organised.
- Carrying out, recording, and storing the required checks on health and safety arrangements for pupils, staff and visitors need improvement.
- Parents and staff were asked to participate in a survey about the school and its leadership. The participation rates were relatively low. A large majority of respondents to each survey felt positive about the school and its direction, although there were some isolated exceptions. Some parents made suggestions for improvement. These were shared with the headteacher, although many of the issues mentioned are not directly within the school's remit.

# Recommendations

The school should take the following actions:

1. Build on existing school improvement processes by:
  - Ensuring improvement plans include precise, measurable objectives, showing what must be achieved, and clearly described steps to ensure the objectives are met
  - Improving school systems for monitoring and record keeping related to health & safety requirements
  - Fully implementing new curriculum plans for English and mathematics, ensuring staff consistently understand and apply their principles
  - Ensuring the full curriculum for key stages 1 and 2 is mapped out and all statutory requirements for coverage of the Jersey Curriculum are met
  - Evaluating the impact of the above improvements on pupils' personal development, and academic achievement.
  
2. Ensure all teaching is consistently as effective as the best examples in the school by:
  - Checking that new plans for the curriculum are implemented fully and consistently
  - Providing more opportunities for pupils to write, and to represent data and observations, independently
  - Ensuring spelling errors of key vocabulary across the curriculum are corrected and then memorised accurately
  - Strengthening the use and quality of question-and-answer work, encouraging teachers to identify and deal with misconceptions, and pupils to explain their understanding, and offer opinions
  - Improving the quality of explanations given by some teachers
  
3. Enhance opportunities for physical development and other areas of learning in Nursery and Reception by:
  - Improving the quality and condition of the outdoor environment
  - Planning more and better opportunities for outdoor play and activity.

## Information about the school

<b>Age range of pupils:</b>	3-11
<b>Gender of pupils:</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll:</b>	210
<b>Headteacher:</b>	Claire Hammond
<b>School telephone number:</b>	01534 737193
<b>School website:</b>	<a href="http://www.belroyal.sch.je">www.belroyal.sch.je</a>

## Contextual information

- 25% of the school's pupils are eligible to receive Jersey Premium funding
- 9% of pupils are on the school's special educational needs register.
- The school's Additional Resource Centre (ARC) provides for pupils who have additional needs, including medical, physical, and language and communication needs. 11 pupils, all with a Record of Need, currently attend. The pupils each follow a bespoke timetable that includes spending time in their year group working alongside their peers, and working in the ARC, either individually or in small groups.

## Information about the review

The review team visited lessons in most year groups and some small group tuition by teachers and teaching assistants. Special attention was given to the provision made for pupils from the ARC.

Reviewers heard pupils read and looked at a large sample of pupils' books in a range of subjects. They talked to pupils about their work and other aspects of their experience at school. Reviewers considered assessment and test data, attendance figures, records of behaviour incidents and other information about the school from various sources, including the internet. Documents relating to safeguarding, and health and safety were scrutinised.

## The review team

The review team consisted of seven reviewers. An experienced off-island consultant led the review.

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.