



Jersey Schools Review Framework – Independent Report of Les Quennevais School

La Route des Quennevais
St Brelade
Jersey
JE3 8LG

Headteacher: Sarah Hague
Review date: 23-25 April 2024

Summary

Les Quennevais certainly succeeds in its mission of 'realising potential through a culture of excellence'. The vision and determination of senior leaders, the skills and expertise of middle leaders and their teams, and the ambition and effort of pupils are an ideal combination. Pupils become world-aware citizens, informed about issues such as climate change, pollution, civil war, slavery, racism and discrimination.

The attention given to ensuring a smooth pathway through Les Quennevais and onward to post-16 destinations is commendable. The school, understandably, is very proud of its 'Year 7 Baccalaureate' programme. The autumn term exhibition of new pupils' summer projects and the awards ceremony are highlights in the school year. Building portfolios of achievements over the course of Year 7 helps younger pupils to feel part of Les Quennevais. Careers education starts early to help them make informed choices about their future, enhanced by a comprehensive website that will soon be accessible to parents.

Leaders' unwavering focus on ensuring pupils have the firm foundations they need for their future, academically and more widely, is admirable. They have their finger on the pulse and know in forensic detail how well individual pupils are achieving and what they are capable of. They are ambitious for more of those with potential to gain the highest GCSE passes. Leaders are outward-looking, drawing on best educational practice beyond Jersey. Teaching is consistently high quality, making the most of every minute.

The enrichment programme is vast, offering sporting, creative and other opportunities which frequently help to take students out of their comfort zone. Inter-house events are an integral and popular part of the school calendar, nurturing a sense of belonging as well as healthy competition. Importantly, participation and commitment beyond the classroom are celebrated as well as excellence.

The school's population is changing. A significant number of pupils are dealing with anxiety or mental health issues. They appreciate the safe space the student support team offers them, and benefit from effective help and encouragement to stay on track with their learning. At the beginning of this academic year, the additional resource centre (ARC) was opened up to pupils with a wider range of additional needs. Leaders are working with a sense of purpose to develop high-quality, tailored provision for these pupils.

Full report

Achievement

- The sustained upward trend in pupils' academic achievement is impressive. The improvements seen in outcomes at GCSE prior to the pandemic have continued. In 2023 the school exceeded its 2019 results for standard passes, strong passes and passes at the higher levels.
- Headline published data for 2023 show that pupils' progress over their time at the school is particularly strong. As a consequence, Les Quennevais outperformed Jersey averages for 11-16 schools across almost all attainment measures and compares favourably with English equivalents.
- All the indications are that the school is set to sustain or further improve examination outcomes in 2024. The review team found strong progress and attainment in Key Stage 4 across the range of subjects offered, with judicious use of interventions to boost learning where needed. Already, early entry data show that English results are on a par with the exceptional 2023 outcomes. Standard passes in mathematics match last year, while strong passes show a marked uplift.
- The picture at Key Stage 3 is positive too, as a result of leaders' refocusing their efforts last year and this on ensuring even better progress in the younger year groups. Through the forensic lens of their new assessment model, leaders are seeking to provide even firmer foundations for the GCSE years. They are determined that all students reach their potential, especially those capable of achieving the highest grades.
- Data give leaders confidence that students are progressing well through the Key Stage 3 curriculum. Pupils' work in lessons and in books, as well as their conversations with the review team confirm that the new assessment model is supporting better achievement.
- Any attainment gaps for pupils eligible for Jersey Premium and those who are multi-lingual learners tend to be negligible by the end of Year 11. While in 2023, almost without exception, boys' grades were lower than girls, this is not a long-term pattern. This year, boys are matching and, on some measures, outperforming girls.
- There is a clear trajectory of improvement in progress for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) over recent years. As a result, there has been a marked increase in the proportion of these pupils who leave school with five or more GCSE passes, including English and mathematics.
- The review team concur that, overall, for pupils with SEND, tailored support and scaffolded learning ensures that progress mirrors that of other pupils. Indeed, in some creative and practical subjects attainment is comparable.
- This year, the school has admitted pupils into the ARC with more complex learning needs than they have been used to. Leaders are developing a suitable curriculum which is already having a positive impact, for example in supporting pupils to gain early reading skills. What is not apparent, because the school has not yet explicitly planned the pathway from starting points, are the gains in these pupils' social and independent skills.
- Destination data at age 16 is remarkable. Well-planned options and careers advice means almost every pupil goes on to suitable education, employment or training.

Behaviour, personal development and welfare

- Looking back over their time at the school, older pupils feel that they can get whatever they want out of their five years at Les Quennevais. In their opinion, the school 'goes the extra mile' for them and they leave with much more than academic qualifications. They talk passionately about the strong community feel and the range of opportunities on offer. Particularly memorable for them are the inter-house competitions, sports events, school productions and meeting real-life, positive role models. High on their list too, is the support they value from staff in helping them to prepare for examinations.

- There is, indeed, a vast and enticing range of enrichment activities on offer which broaden students' achievement. Participation rates are high as students make the most of opportunities to try new things, as well as showcase and hone their skills. Drama productions and musical events are impressive affairs. The summer activity week is hugely popular, and instrumental in developing confidence and social skills as students mix with peers from different year groups.
- The personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme supports pupils' wellbeing and personal development extremely well. The high-quality and well-resourced curriculum is delivered thoughtfully by a designated team of subject specialists and leaders. Creative and cross-curricular planning enables the teaching of some topics within subjects. This frees up time in PSHE lessons to be responsive to live or current issues, such as vaping, misogyny or online abuse. As yet, though, the school has not designed a bespoke personal development curriculum for pupils with complex learning needs.
- High-quality careers guidance helps pupils make informed choices about courses that suit their aspirations, interests and academic achievement. The curriculum has been broadened to include suitable vocational options with pathways to employment opportunities on the Island.
- Students consistently embody the school values of 'ambition, respect and resilience'. They are proud advocates for their school, quite rightly appreciating all that Les Quennevais offers them. These positive attitudes are reflected in overall attendance that is above other local secondary schools and those in England.
- Behaviour is impeccable. The behaviour policy is designed to support learning and does just that. Invariably, pupils turn up to lessons expecting to learn. They are attentive and absorbed in lessons whether listening to the teacher explain or model, or working independently or with their peers. They enjoy being challenged in their thinking. Across the year groups, pupils are respectful to staff and to each other.
- Movement around the school is exceptionally orderly, without the need to be overly controlled by staff, which is no mean feat with the numbers of pupils involved. Break times have an affable buzz about them as pupils meet up with their friends.
- Any occasions when pupils fall out are sensitively managed. Staff take care to listen to all involved to resolve the situation and find a way forward. Sanctions for misbehaviour are used prudently, so as to minimise lost learning. There is a systematic approach to cross-referencing cases and identifying repeat behaviours so as to tackle the root cause. The school makes good use of the expertise of other agencies to support where needed.
- Pupils understand what bullying is and the causes. They are adamant that bullying and prejudice of any sort are rare, and confident that any incidents will be dealt with swiftly and fairly. The school's records back this up, showing a research-informed approach to dealing with both parties.

Effectiveness of teaching

- Leaders' assiduous focus on ensuring consistently high-quality teaching has, without a doubt, paid off. They set a high bar at the point of recruitment. Enhanced by a research-informed programme of professional development, coupled with ongoing, rich departmental conversations about learning, teaching is, typically, very high quality.
- This 'professional learning community' approach is particularly beneficial for teachers at the beginning of their careers or those new to the school. The wraparound, supportive programme, underpinned by widely acknowledged research, quickly sets the high

standard of teaching expected as the norm. The greatest beneficiaries are, of course, the pupils.

- Teachers' subject expertise is, as a consequence, continuously being finely tuned. They are very well versed in current educational thinking beyond the island about best practice in teaching and learning. Staff teaching outside their own subject are well supported with highly structured resources.
- Typically, lessons are intelligently designed to maximise learning. Recap and retrieval of previous knowledge are common features, ensuring that pupils' learning is embedded. Subject-specific vocabulary is systematically developed to deepen their understanding and thinking. A well-developed work ethic underpins pupils' high levels of engagement and effort.
- Teaching is engaging, making excellent use of time and resources. Teachers' strong subject knowledge, and pedagogical understanding as to how to build learning over time so that pupils retain key knowledge and skills, shine through in class. Where, rarely, this is not the case, leaders are quick to diagnose the issue and ensure support and challenge to bring practice up to the Les Quennevais standard.
- Pupils with low prior attainment or barriers to learning typically benefit from carefully thought-through support on top of 'quality first teaching'. Extra teaching or help in lessons, including using tablets to access digital resources, targeted interventions and access to wellbeing support are all used effectively.
- Pupils in the ARC with the most complex learning needs are increasingly well catered for. As leaders acknowledge, designing provision that fully meets the needs of these pupils, whether in the ARC or supported in mainstream, is new for the school. As such, it is still a work in progress.
- Questioning is, mostly, used expertly to elicit pupils' understanding and to adapt teaching in and between lessons where needed. Feedback ensures that pupils from the younger years upwards have a mature understanding of how well they are doing and how they need to improve. Occasionally, pupils would benefit from being given more time to respond, or explain their thinking, so as to deepen their learning. Those capable of reaching the highest grades are not always challenged sufficiently to write at length to explain their learning. For some, this impedes their ability to tackle longer examination questions successfully.
- Assessment of pupils' learning is highly effective. Attainment and progress are tracked meticulously. The new assessment model in Key Stage 3 is closely matched to the curriculum in each subject, so providing a more granular picture of what pupils have learned, or not. This is being used well to inform teaching. Interventions are targeted to make up gaps and ensure that pupils ultimately attain as highly as they can in public examinations, so as to set them up well for the future.

Effectiveness of leadership and management

- Leaders' relentless focus on further improvement is pupil-centred and outward-looking, determined to learn from research and best practice beyond the island. The school vision of 'learning to be your best through excellence and enjoyment' is at the heart of the school's work and the forefront of leaders' decision making.
- Senior leaders work effectively together, complementing each other's strengths and expertise. They have an honest and mostly very accurate view of the school's strengths and what could be better still. Improvement planning is focused on the most important priorities, so the school continues to adapt to meet pupils' needs and move forward with the times.

- Of particular note, is the work to refine the curriculum and assessment to reflect current educational thinking and research in England about how pupils best learn and remember more. Refinements to the monitoring, evaluation and review cycle are already starting to enhance the forensic analysis of subject-level performance further.
- The sum is greater than the parts when it comes to initiatives intended to raise the bar for teaching. The combination of collaborative planning, focused briefings, instructional coaching, performance reviews and a targeted professional development programme has had a demonstrable, positive impact on pupils' experience and in turn their achievement.
- Senior leaders have nurtured an incredibly strong middle leadership team who are the drivers of change at classroom level. They are, almost without exception, strong role models and advocates of striving for excellence, who cultivate teams of reflective practitioners. It is no wonder that typical comments from teachers in the survey include being 'proud to be part of the team at Les Quennevais' and appreciating 'the challenge to be the best that they can'.
- Pupils are an important and influential layer of leadership. Members of the student leadership team are instrumental in organising the many events that take place each year. They ensure that the pupils' voice is heard loud and clear on key decisions, such as the recent recruitment of the new headteacher. The student council influence important matters like recycling and healthy eating.
- Governors are, quite rightly, very proud of the school. They receive detailed reports from leaders and seek to find out more through visits to school and talking to pupils. Their challenge is limited, in part because they do not have sight of external reports about the school's work.
- Promoting equality of opportunity permeates all aspects of school life. That said, leaders acknowledge that they have found the redesignation of the ARC challenging. They have not got as far as they would have liked in ensuring that provision for pupils with the most complex learning needs is of the same high standard as for others in school. Communication with these pupils' parents about learning could be stronger. In fact, a significant minority of all parents responding to the survey would welcome more information about the curriculum and their child's learning.
- Safeguarding is effective. There is a culture of vigilance which takes account of the increasing number of pupils with SEND who may be particularly vulnerable to harm. All staff are trained to an appropriate level. They know the signs that a pupil may be at risk, and how to report concerns. Pastoral leaders champion individual's needs and persist in chasing other agencies where they are not satisfied that concerns are being taken seriously enough.

Recommendations

The school should take the following actions:

1. Further improve the redesignated ARC provision by:
 - continuing to develop an appropriate curriculum, including bespoke personal development provision, for pupils with the most complex learning needs
 - working more closely with their parents to ensure greater synergy between learning at school and home
 - developing the use of pre-teaching to enable pupils with complex learning needs to join mainstream lessons, as appropriate
 - making sure that the progress of any pupils educated offsite is carefully monitored.
2. Maintain and further build on already high achievement by:
 - continuing to monitor, and refine as needed, the new assessment model to ensure consistently strong progress for all groups of pupils, particularly those with SEND, in Key Stage 3
 - ensuring that pupils capable of the highest level GCSE passes are consistently well supported to achieve their potential.

Information about the school

Age range of pupils: 11-16 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

Number of pupils on the school roll: 862

Headteacher: Sarah Hague

School telephone number: 01534 743171

School website: www.lesquennevais.sch.je

Contextual information

- Les Quennevais is a school with its own governing body that has grown in size in recent years from around 650 pupils to over 850. It moved into new, purpose-built premises in 2020.
- Staff and pupil turnover are low. The headteacher was in her 12th year in post at the time of the review, having been at Les Quennevais for 26 years. A new headteacher has been appointed to replace her when she moves to another headship on Island in September 2024.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for Jersey Premium funding or who are multi-lingual learners are lower than other 11-16 secondary schools on the island. The same is true of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities across the school.
- Les Quennevais has had an additional resource centre (ARC) for a very small number of pupils with physical disabilities for a number of years. In September 2023, the designation of the ARC was lifted to cater for a wider range of special educational

needs and/or disabilities. There were 12 pupils in the ARC at the time of the review, being educated between the ARC and mainstream classes.

- A very small number of pupils are educated offsite for part or all of the week.

Information about the review

- The review team visited lessons to observe teaching and learning, including looking at students' work, across all year groups and a wide range of subjects, both academic and vocational and including the ARC. They also scrutinised samples of pupils' work in a number of subjects in more depth and visited some tutor times and departments' collaborative planning sessions.
- Reviewers met with groups of pupils from each year group and the school council to gather their views of the school, including how it ensures their safety and wellbeing. They also observed and talked to pupils at break times and as they moved around the school. Similarly, the team considered the views of staff and parents gathered through surveys conducted both by the school and specifically for this review.
- Discussions were held with members of the governing body, senior and middle leaders and other staff, including some new to teaching or to the school. The school's published assessment information and data were analysed and taken into account, alongside the school's internal data and leaders' analysis.
- Reviewers considered a range of documents, including leaders' self-evaluation, their improvement and plans and behaviour and safeguarding records. A tour of the school site was made to check on health and safety.

The review team

The review was led by an experienced off-Island reviewer. There were seven reviewers in total in the team.

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.