



Jersey Schools Review Framework – Independent Report of St Luke’s Primary School

Elizabeth Street
St Saviour
Jersey JE2 7PG

Headteacher: Adam Turner
Review date: 11-13 June 2024

Summary

Pupils enjoy attending this small, safe, and well-run school. When children join the Nursery or Reception class, they get off to an excellent start in the expected areas of learning, for instance learning to play alongside others, exercising to grow stronger, and learning new vocabulary and the sounds they will need as they begin to read and write. Pupils are well-known as individuals by staff. Those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), pupils eligible for Jersey Premium funding to support their learning, and those who are multi-lingual learners are well catered for and often reach higher standards than the Jersey average.

Pupils in Year 6 have extremely effective teaching over time. Current standards compare well with Jersey averages, in reading, writing and mathematics. Engaging learning and a good deal of interest arises throughout the school from work in art & design and music. The school offers many visits and visitors to add interest to the curriculum. Personal development, including helping others, and learning about relationships, equality, and democracy, is strong.

In most parts of the school, pupils’ reading skills develop effectively, as does the way they speak and discuss ideas and their learning. Warm relationships underpin pupils’ calm and very impressive behaviour. The great majority of pupils concentrate well and so often make solid progress. However, progress is uneven between different classes and subjects. Some significant but unavoidable staffing changes have presented challenges recently. Successfully integrating a large proportion of the workforce into established ways of working inevitably takes time. Consequently, some necessary improvements to curriculum planning have been held up. Teachers still need more detailed guidance on what to teach, in a number of subjects, particularly in history and geography. Improvements are also needed to the teaching of handwriting.

The school is strongly and expertly led. Support for new staff has been well organised. The improvement work which remains to be done is already well-planned. The headteacher is clear what he expects from staff, and this is appreciated by the teachers. Parents who answered the recent survey praised the school’s welcoming ethos and nurturing approach. The review team found these, too.

Full report

Achievement

- Over several years, pupils have achieved increasingly well in assessments and tests. By age 11, school averages are often at least in line with Jersey averages.
- During the review, particularly strong progress was seen in Year 6 and in Nursery and Reception.
- Some children enter early years (Nursery and Reception) with limited skills in spoken English. They, and other children often make swift progress with speaking, vocabulary, and confidence because of very good learning experiences and a focus on talking with adults. All children make an impressive start with phonics. This gives a good basis for reading and writing, which is also seen in older classes. Interesting work, well-organised resources, and expert interactions from adults enable children to do well across all the areas of learning. For instance, opportunities to climb, balance, run, and jump, and the use of scissors, paint and varied materials, lead to effective physical development. Mathematical development is also strong.
- By the end of Year 6, pupils achieve well because of the expert and challenging teaching they receive. A very large majority reach or exceed expectations for their age in English, mathematics and science and make good progress in a wide range of other subjects.
- Across the school, a project which encourages pupils to explain, describe, and comment on their learning, and to listen carefully to each other, is making a positive impact on achievement and self-confidence. These features are becoming a strength of the school.
- Pupils typically make strong progress with reading, building on their knowledge of literature and using the letter sounds they learn in the youngest classes. Those who read to reviewers, did so with confidence and pleasing expression. Pupils who begin to struggle with reading are picked up early and catch-up lessons work well to rebuild their confidence and skills.
- In mathematics, in Key Stages 1 and 2. the work is pitched well for pupils' ages. There are regular opportunities for revision and developing mathematical thinking. The level of understanding and rates of progress are often solid but, as in other subjects, pupils' success varies too much with the effectiveness of teaching.
- Some subjects in the wider curriculum, including art & design, often lead to creditable achievement through broad and well-planned learning experiences. Pupils have rich opportunities for learning in music, including the chance to try a number of orchestral instruments.
- Unfortunately, teaching in parts of Key Stages 1 and 2 is not consistently effective, and planning of the curriculum does not give enough guidance to teachers in some subjects. As a result, pupils' learning is not as secure as it should be. Their progress is patchy. In history and geography, pupils do not know and understand enough, including information about Jersey and their own locality. Presentation and setting out have seen improvement, but handwriting is not always good enough, particularly when joined writing is introduced. The school is aware of this issue and has plans for improvement.
- Across much of the school, Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) is effective, helping pupils to develop their understanding of various aspects, including physical and mental health, relationships, aspects of democracy, the law and financial management.
- Pupils eligible for Jersey Premium funding, multi-lingual learners and those with SEND generally make similar rates of progress to their classmates, based on their starting points. Those experiencing any difficulties are monitored well and effective help is provided to support their needs, enabling them to progress well over time.

Behaviour, personal development and welfare

- Children in Nursery and Reception work in a safe and secure environment. Their routines are well established, and they know what is expected of them. As a result, they choose activities carefully, concentrate well, and take care with equipment and resources. The careful and sympathetic way adults treat children sets a good example for relationships, so they get on well together and respond confidently to the many opportunities offered. In large group activities, children show interest and concentrate beautifully. Adults are expert at managing any wavering involvement, for instance by leading a song to refocus attention.
- Key Stage 1 and 2 pupils are proud of their school and feel well cared-for and secure. Their behaviour in classrooms, when moving around the building and in the playgrounds is impressive. Pupils understand the rules and how sticking to them improves the safety and happiness of everyone. Overall, behaviour and self-discipline are exemplary.
- Where teachers' expectations are high, pupils' participation and involvement in learning activities are also particularly good. Where teaching is less challenging, or less interesting, concentration and involvement occasionally dim. However, pupils across all parts of the school almost always follow instructions rapidly and willingly, frequently showing good independence. As one pupil said, 'By trying your best and helping yourself ... you can get really good at things!'
- Spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development are strong throughout the school. The overall curriculum and enrichment activities, often going well beyond statutory requirements, support pupils' personal development, and add to their interest and commitment to their school. Pupils show strong awareness of the difference between right and wrong.
- Highlights of the school's provision, which contribute to personal development, include visits within Jersey, the wide provision for music education, the use of good literature, the emphasis on improving speaking and listening, and the curriculum for art & design. As in other schools, St Luke's participates in Jersey festivals and offers learning in French and Jèrriais. The most effective teaching encourages debate and 'respectful disagreement,' where appropriate. This teaching is having a noticeably positive impact on pupils' confidence, and willingness to talk, formally and informally. Pupils are particularly good at relating to visitors and are well-used to sharing ideas with staff. Across the school, pupils show high levels of willingness to attempt work, even when they find it taxing; there is a good work ethic.
- There are many examples of pupils taking responsibility around the school. This ranges from helping in the classroom to contributing to the school council, which offers opportunities for pupils to be listened to and make a difference. Pupils speak of supporting each other, for instance by looking after anyone who might be upset. There is, thus, a strong picture of pupils being involved in supporting their school community in practical ways.
- Pupils seem confident and very much at home in all parts of this school. They are happy, content, and secure. Speaking to reviewers, pupils say they feel safe. They say bullying is exceedingly rare, that they know the adults to talk to if they are worried and that they will be listened to and helped should there be any unkindness.
- The curriculum offers well-planned opportunities for pupils to understand various dangers they might meet, and how to avoid them. This includes online dangers and the potential for on-line bullying. Pupils are knowledgeable and show good understanding of the warnings and advice they have been given about staying safe online. They also know the school monitors their online activity.
- Attendance is in line with current Jersey averages and the great majority of pupils arrive punctually.

Effectiveness of teaching

- Teaching in the early years is very well planned and organised. There is a thoughtful balance between adult-directed activities, such as phonics, and self-chosen activities, often related to themes or topics, which appeal to the children, currently 'pirates.' Resources are of high quality and exceptionally good use is made of the available indoor and outdoor spaces. Supervision is good. Adults embrace opportunities to become involved in play, and successfully capitalise on 'teachable moments.' There is an ambitious emphasis on developing children's vocabulary. Assessment is well-organised by focusing regularly on particular pupils in turn to recognise the progress they are making and any emerging needs.
- In the rest of the school, the most effective teaching leads to significant progress through well-structured and appropriately pitched activities. This teaching provides productive sequences of explanation, questioning and probing. This is enhanced by an emphasis on pupils listening attentively and speaking at length. Pupils explicitly build on each other's answers and develop their own thinking by doing so. Discussion is also used effectively to help them recall and fix previous learning.
- As a result of the most effective teaching, pupils are interested, and want to do well in challenging work, which often pushes them hard. Teachers are ambitious for pupils' learning. Pupils clearly enjoy the progress they know they are making.
- Typically, during the most effective teaching, adults move around the classroom as pupils work. They quickly identify those who can proceed to unaided work, and spot any who are in difficulty, and who require more explanation or re-teaching. This helps pupils to make progress from their starting points and maintains their confidence. The most effective practitioners know their pupils and their needs very well. They use this knowledge to respond to emerging individual needs. Pupils with SEND are particularly well-known and, where necessary, are supported with appropriate specialist interventions.
- Sometimes teaching does not maintain the momentum of learning or make smooth and efficient transitions between activities. The pace of learning is not always appropriate or is not adjusted to meet individual needs. Here the teaching can move on too fast and lead to superficial learning or misunderstandings. In some cases, there is insufficient monitoring, so difficulties are not identified. Higher achieving pupils sometimes mark time when they could make a confident start on written/practical work more quickly than others.
- The outline planning of curriculum content has been guided well by senior leaders in most cases. This should help to ensure the basic requirements of the Jersey Curriculum are tackled. However, planning does not give enough guidance to staff to ensure in-depth coverage of some subjects, particularly in history and geography. Current work is not always pitched at age-appropriate standards. This is partly because the plans seen do not have clear statements about what children should know, understand and be able to do as a result of the teaching. Although planned time has been allocated for individual units of work, some units receive only brief and superficial attention when taught.
- Throughout the school, teaching assistants generally make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning and the progress they make. Pupils with identified needs often make good progress as a result.
- Samples of reports show parents receive regular and detailed information on their children's progress as assessed by the school.

Effectiveness of leadership and management

- The school's leaders have a strong vision for the school. Teaching staff say they know leaders' expectations and are confident they will receive help and advice to enable them to achieve what is required.
- Senior leaders know the school's strengths and weaknesses well. They have identified the issues which need attention and have a well-written plan to make improvements. Solid progress through the plan is being achieved, and substantial improvements have been made over recent years. Previous work in pupils' books shows good progress in number of subjects.
- Although not many parents responded to the review survey, a great majority of those who did, showed positive views and appreciation of a happy, nurturing, and caring school ethos. The review found strong evidence that this is the case.
- The Early Years is well led. Its strong and effective team offers an excellent start to children's learning.
- Arrangements for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities are very well organised, with well-focused support, good assessments of progress, and careful record keeping. Outside services, including a school-employed educational psychologist, make good contributions and generally help staff to support pupils well.
- The school ensures pupils feel safe and makes checks on any who may be worried or vulnerable. Safeguarding is effective. Signs of vulnerability are carefully noted, and pupils are monitored systematically. Through their lessons, pupils learn about common dangers and how to avoid them. The facilities used by pupils are safe and well maintained. The school site and buildings are safe, although a small number of areas have needed to be taken out of use, pending improvements being made.
- The school occupies a small site, but careful timetabling means pupils of all ages have good, safe access to the available resources, including outside play spaces.
- Leaders have worked hard to support pupils' progress, and, for the past few years, the oldest pupils have done well in relation to Jersey averages in tests and assessments. The curriculum is enriched by a wide range of visits, visitors, and clubs, which is creditable for a school of this size.
- For a number of years, there had been little staff turnover and ongoing development work was successful, although incomplete. The current picture is not as positive as this, with inconsistency in achievement between year groups and subjects, and plans for the curriculum remaining a work in progress.
- Recently, there has been a period of staffing change. A great deal of effort has been put into integrating new and temporary staff into the school's ways of working. However, this, coupled with a period of industrial action across Jersey has inevitably had an impact and has put significant pressure on the small senior leadership team. Progress has been made, but the pace of change has slowed, and some important developments such as curriculum planning have not flourished as they might otherwise have done. Senior leaders are aware of the issues and have plans to resolve them. It is likely that settling in new staff and bringing back consistency will take some more time.
- Leaders take care to ensure all groups of pupils, including those who are multi-lingual learners, those with SEND, and those entitled to Jersey Premium funding, receive full access to the school's curriculum and the programme of extra-curricular activities. This is successful and these groups typically do at least as well as their peers across Jersey.

Recommendations

The school should take the following actions:

1. Continue to improve the curriculum by:
 - Providing more detailed guidance on what teachers should teach in each year group, in foundation subjects
 - Ensuring each statutory subject receives sufficient time to ensure the expected depth of learning
 - Providing work which offers clear progression from year to year and so reaches appropriate age-related standards
 - Setting measurable objectives for each unit of work, showing what pupils should know, understand and be able to do as a result of their teaching
 - Monitoring and assessing pupils' progress in relation to the objectives set.
2. Train and monitor staff to make the effectiveness of teaching consistently as good as the best already achieved in the school by:
 - Ensuring the teaching and learning policy is implemented consistently, particularly in relation to high expectations, an appropriate pace of learning, and effective day-to-day assessment and associated challenge and support
 - Providing training on implementing the improving curriculum guidance and its objectives.
3. Improve leadership and management by:
 - Monitoring the quality and presentation of pupils' work more closely and continuing to take action where outcomes do not meet expectations.

Information about the school

Age range of pupils:	3-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll:	186
Headteacher:	Adam Turner
School telephone number:	01534 730657
School website:	www.stluke.sch.je

Contextual information

- The proportion of pupils eligible for Jersey Premium is 33%.
- The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is 14%.
- The school offers nursery provision.

Information about the review

Fifteen lessons were visited. Samples of pupils' work from each class in Key Stages 1 and 2 were considered. Pupils discussed their work and learning across a wide range of subjects. A small sample of pupils read to reviewers.

Extensive discussions were held with staff and pupils about safeguarding, and many relevant documents were scrutinised.

Discussions were held with leaders about their work. Classroom teachers were asked about their roles, the help and guidance they are given, and the nature of the curriculum plans they use.

Reviewers observed break times and the breakfast club.

Published information and external reports were considered, as was a wide range of school documentation.

The review team

The review was led by an experienced off-Island reviewer and the team consisted of three 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.