



Jersey Schools Review Framework – Independent Report of

St John's School

La Rue de la Mare Ballam
St John
Jersey
JE3 4EJ

Headteacher: Jamie Hazley
Review date: 7-9 February 2023

Summary

The new headteacher has very quickly gained the wholehearted support of the school community. He has accurately analysed the many strengths of the school and the necessary areas for development. Leaders appreciate that some aspects of the school development plan need refinement.

There has been a significant turnover of staff over the last year. Leaders have provided training and effective teamwork which ensure that pupils are consistently well taught by skilled practitioners. Pupils' personal development and welfare at St John's is promoted well. Pupils enjoy school and this is reflected in their exemplary behaviour in lessons and their above average attendance. Parents, staff and pupils are confident their children are safe and safeguarding arrangements are secure.

Caring staff address children's needs well in Nursery and Reception giving them a sound foundation for their future learning. Over time, pupils' phonic skills are developed well which helps them to attain above average standards in reading. In early years classrooms and outdoor areas the children would benefit from more prompts to direct their learning and offer greater challenge in the distinct learning areas.

Staff nurture strong relationships and know each of their pupils well. The specific needs of individuals, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are invariably well addressed. Bespoke support is made for multilingual learners (MML) or those for whom the school receives the Jersey Premium.

Pupils here attain standards that compare well at all ages with other schools on the island. Leaders are ambitious to raise standards still further. For example, they recognise that older pupils with high prior attainment do not always receive sufficient challenge in mathematics to extend their learning. Staff are rightly seeking to involve pupils more actively at times in their learning in lessons through improved feedback and using time more productively.

Full report

Achievement

- Statistical analysis of any one year must be viewed with caution in this one-form entry school because one child may represent four or five percent of the total cohort. The attainment data over a number of years, however, gives a positive picture of pupils' attainment and progress.
- Last year's Reception year cohort made strong progress from their starting points in the key areas of literacy, mathematics and personal and social development. However, in other areas, notably communication and language and expressive arts and design, their attainment was below average for similar schools. Our review evidence agrees with the school's own data showing that the current Reception class are targeted to attain at least as well overall as the Jersey average. This would reflect a sustained good pattern of achievement over a number of years in early years, with the results last year being a temporary dip.
- Last year's attainment in other years compared favourably with the average for government maintained primary schools. Results were particularly strong at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6. Attainment in reading and mathematics were both higher than average, reflecting the school's history of above average performance. The attainment in spelling, punctuation and grammar, although matching the Jersey average, was the least strong feature for the last Year 6 cohort.
- There is no overall difference in attainment by gender although in a few classes, boys attain better than girls in mathematics and girls outperform boys in reading and writing. As a result, the school has recognised that the engagement, and hence attainment, of boys in English needs to be addressed further. Outcomes in phonics are good for boys and girls with most pupils meeting expectations by the end of Year 2.
- The number of multilingual learners (MLL) is low and they join the school generally at a typical level of language acquisition. They achieve well.
- There is a low number of pupils for whom the school receives the Jersey Premium funding. Their achievement is generally above Jersey averages for this group of pupils but slightly below that of their peers.
- The current work of pupils in almost all year groups across the curriculum, including English and mathematics, reflects consistently strong progress. Although there is some underachievement in mathematics by older pupils with high prior attainment, most pupils are developing secure knowledge and skills related to their varying starting points. Teachers ensure that pupils with SEND achieve well.
- Pupils read often and show a good understanding of what they read. This has built on their secure grasp of phonics and early language development.
- By the time they leave the school pupils have gained a good grounding in key knowledge and skills, particularly in English and mathematics, which prepare them well for secondary education.

Behaviour, personal development and welfare

- Behaviour is often exemplary in most classrooms because the relationships between the adults and the pupils are so strong. The school has effective systems to monitor behaviour but these are largely unnecessary because all the pupils are well known to the staff and treated as individuals. In their survey returns, all staff judged that pupils are well

behaved and 97% of parents confirmed that their children were safe and that the school responded well to any concerns about bullying.

- The school places a considerable emphasis on pupils' mental health and well-being, reflected by the creation of the post of wellbeing coordinator. She has received training in attachment based mentoring and wellbeing.
- The school also places a growing emphasis on the development of the pupils' voice. Leaders are committed to the Voice 21 project which is aiming to develop students' confidence, articulacy and capacity to learn through an emphasis on oracy.
- There is already a well-established student council with representation across the school. The headteacher has a clear vision to extend its role further beyond the request of resources.
- The Personal Social and Health Education (PSHE) programme promotes pupils' personal development well. For example, pupils have learnt about the dangers of alcohol and drug misuse and how to safely use the internet. As a result, they can confidently talk about how to handle peer pressures.
- There is also a focus on preventing bullying as part of the PSHE programme. The anti-bullying week is part of the assembly calendar. Almost all pupils said they were happy and enjoyed school. As a result, attendance for the last academic year exceeded the island average, as it has done for a number of years. This is due to strong relationships between staff, parents and their children and a clear system for challenging absentee issues through a graduated response led by the deputy headteacher.
- There is a committed approach to supporting vulnerable pupils, which was highlighted in the virtual visit report just after the Covid epidemic was at its peak.
- The school encourages pupils to learn independently, and many pupils are articulate and well-informed for their age. However, there are times when some are insufficiently stretched or lack independence. Their work is finished but they do not show the self-discipline and responsibility to refine it and enhance it.
- A range of attractive displays in the school highlight aspects of personal development clearly. Pupils' moral, spiritual, social and cultural development is promoted well, although their understanding of democratic processes is less pronounced than sometimes found.

Effectiveness of teaching

- Almost half of the teaching staff coincidentally started in September. They adjusted quickly to the specific features of the school swiftly analysing the potential of their pupils and building good relationships through mutual respect and interest.
- The children receive a very secure grounding in the Nursery which is well resourced and recently upgraded. The early years leader has a clear understanding of the needs of children of this age. Distinct learning areas are well established and identified in both Reception and Nursery. These would be further enhanced by learning prompts to direct children's activities and extend their engagement. A range of opportunities are presented in the continuous provision, but at times children lack purpose and challenge in what they are doing.
- Teachers in all years use their secure subject knowledge to inform what the pupils learn and ensure they attain at least the levels which are expected for their age. The teachers take advantage of the positive attitudes of pupils to encourage discussion. Occasionally, however, some introductions by teachers are too long and at times there is a lack of urgency with time meaning that pupils could be learning faster.

- Generally, the needs of individual pupils and groups are well addressed, for instance, for the small number of multilingual learners in the school. There are, however, small pockets where some pupils are not challenged sufficiently, such as older pupils with high prior attainment in mathematics.
- Clear steps for progress are planned for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). There are good systems in place to monitor their progress and ensure interventions are appropriate and well taught.
- The teaching of phonics is consistent through the early years and key stage 1 so that standards by Year 2 are above the island average. The teaching of reading is a strength throughout the school.
- The school is reviewing its feedback and marking policy so that all pupils gain a clearer understanding of how they are progressing and what they need to do to improve.

Effectiveness of leadership and management

- The headteacher has quickly analysed the strengths of the school and what needs to be developed. He is already providing very effective leadership. This is exemplified by the survey returns. All staff said they were proud to be members of the school and parents highlighted the strength of the new leadership in terms of the good communication with parents and the impact of the breakfast club.
- Staff meetings were sensibly used at the start of this academic year to discuss, share and at times coach agreed approaches both to existing schemes and new initiatives. In this way consistency was encouraged in teaching planning and practice, which was critical with so many new staff. A clear outline of monitoring activities for both senior leaders and subject leaders was used to create accountability at all levels.
- High priority was given to the training needs of staff and for members to become trainers so initiatives could be sustained. Performance Management discussions and targets were held and set for all staff led by the headteacher.
- Planning has been reviewed with slight adaptations made to ensure knowledge is a focal point. The rationale of the plan is to now implement knowledge organisers. Similarly, all curriculum medium term plans focus on the importance of questioning and the need to tier the difficulty of the questions to deepen learning.
- Middle leaders, often inexperienced, are starting to provide well-directed guidance for their key stage or subjects. The management of English and mathematics is effective and the leaders have a clear understanding of what is needed to improve in their subject.
- The established leadership of early years has ensured children's sustained progress over a number of years and provided a good foundation for later learning. The school is aware of the small number of MLL learners, makes appropriate provision for them and carefully monitors their attainment and progress.
- The SENCO is providing effective leadership for pupils with SEND. Provision for these pupils is very strong and there is a concerted effort to inform and support parents.
- The school recognises that at times the Jersey Premium funding has been used to provide general initiatives and is now aiming to direct its use more specifically on the intended target pupils. The Lead has a good grasp of what needs to be done and has clear plans to achieve this.
- The curriculum provides a range of opportunities for pupils to learn and is well balanced. There is a good range of visitors and wide opportunities for pupils to learn across the curriculum. All pupils learn French.

- The school improvement plan is a thorough document which highlights appropriate priorities. However, at times the intended outcomes are insufficiently precise to judge accurately whether actions and initiatives to bring about improvement have been successful. The dates for completion of actions are similarly often not precise enough and the differentiation between who is leading initiatives and who is judging their success is unclear.
- Safeguarding is effective. Leaders and staff take appropriate actions to identify pupils who may be at risk, report concerns and support their needs. A full audit was completed with an update in the first term of the Head's leadership. There are good systems and staff training is up-to-date.

Recommendations

The school should take the following actions:

1. Improve the challenge and purpose of activities in continuous provision in early years by providing prompts to direct pupils' learning in distinct areas.
2. Increase the challenge for higher prior attaining pupils, particularly in mathematics, by:
 - ensuring they are given more thought-provoking tasks when they have completed the work undertaken by the rest of the class
 - ensuring all parts of lessons involve appropriately probing questions and suitably high expectations.
3. Improve the school development plan by:
 - making the desired outcomes more precise and measurable where possible
 - identifying a different person to carry out initiatives or actions from the person who will monitor their success
 - more regularly giving a specified date for the completion of actions or an initiative.
4. Enhance pupils' learning and use time more productively by:
 - increasing pupils' involvement in discussions and reducing the length of teacher expositions
 - improving the impact of feedback given to pupils about the work they are doing.

Information about the school

Age range of pupils: 3-11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

Number of pupils on the school roll: 182

Headteacher: Jamie Hazley

School telephone number: 01534861692

School website: www.stjohn.sch.je

Contextual information

- There are 16% of pupils eligible for Jersey Premium, which is below the average for government provided schools.
-
- The proportions of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is 14%, which is in line with the average for government provided schools.

Information about the review

- Lessons were visited across all years and work was sampled in Years 1-6 across the curriculum but centering on English and mathematics.
- Discussions were held with a range of pupils separately and within lessons.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, heads of all three key stages, the leaders of mathematics and literacy, the SENCO, and teachers with responsibility for MLL pupils and pupils for whom the school receives the Jersey Premium.
- The school data report and other published performance information was reviewed together with relevant documents, policies and information, including the school development plan and self-evaluation form.

The review team

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

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.