



JERSEY PUTTING
CHILDREN FIRST



Government of
JERSEY

Our Children, Our Languages

Language Diversity in Jersey Schools

The new Language Policy for Jersey Education – what does it mean for you?



Our Mission

Jersey schools encourage, welcome and respond to a diverse range of language strengths, needs and identities, with the task of preparing students to leave school/college with the linguistic, academic, and social skills and competencies they require to become successful members of the community. A key element for success is empowering children to value their own language and cultures and those of their peers. Raising the profile of all languages has a positive impact on inclusion and well-being for students.

Jersey schools have a new language policy. This policy was created to help schools and teachers understand and support language learning in all schools.

- It recognises the importance of developing English fully, to access learning and career pathways.
- It recognises the importance of continued development of children's home languages – for their identity, their future, and for the benefits of being bilingual.
- It recognises that all children should have opportunities to explore and experience Jèrriais, as the heritage language of the Island.
- It recognises the benefits for all children of learning another language, whether that be French, Portuguese, Jèrriais, or Mandarin (or any other language!)

Going to school in another language

What do we need to know?

1. The home language is the base on which other languages are built.

Continuing to develop in the home/dominant language is key to success in learning English (and other languages!)

2. Full acquisition of the language of instruction (English) can take 3-9 years, to full academic proficiency

While children are learning English at school, they may take more time to learn things, and help at home is very important.

What can you do at home?

- Make sure your child knows how important their own language is!
- Talk to your child's teacher about language development – it's important for them to understand how your child uses their languages.
- Connect with your child's teacher regularly, to find out how to support learning at home

Top tips for parents

1. Play games, tell stories, and read books with your children regularly – this is the best way to develop language
2. If your children need help with their homework, you can help them in your own language – it's good for them!
3. Find ways for your children to spend time with others who speak your language
4. Join a Community Language School with your children (or start your own – ask your child's school for help!).



The Language Policy for Jersey Education: A 21st Century Policy for a 21st Century Future

“Languages form an integral part of life. For people living in Jersey languages contribute to our diverse and vibrant society, and so should be acknowledged and celebrated. The promotion and development of languages is essential to identity and inclusion. It is the aim of this Policy to provide a consistent framework for educators to create optimal conditions for students to achieve and reach their full potential.”

Being bilingual brings many benefits, including cognitive, linguistic, and social. Jersey has a wealth of languages in schools and in the community, and the new Language Policy for Jersey Education is designed to give all students the opportunity for positive experiences with language learning and flourish as developing bilinguals. Here we outline the main objectives of the policy and how they will help improve opportunities for all students to develop their bilingual potential.

“All students benefit from opportunities to learn languages spoken in their communities and internationally.”

The benefits of bi/multilingualism are clear, whether the languages involved are high-status global languages or local or indigenous languages. Language learning should be supported for all children, in the languages that make sense for their linguistic profile.

“English has been the language of instruction in Jersey schools since 1912 and, in an increasingly globalised world, it is imperative that our students have highly developed English language skills by the time they leave education and enter the workplace.”

All multilingual learners who are learning English as an additional language need support from specialist teachers and key workers, as well as from their classroom teachers. For multilingual learners with EAL to flourish, Jersey schools must embrace an ‘Every teacher is a language teacher’ philosophy and approach to teaching.

“The home language that each child brings to school with them is a critical element of their cognitive, emotional, social, and identity development.”

Far from being a hindrance for learning the school languages, multilingual learners' home languages are the strong foundation on which we build language and content. Supporting full inclusion of our multilingual learners requires embracing and leveraging linguistic diversity for all.

“Learning and speaking Jersey's unique, indigenous Jèrriais language can instil a sense of belonging in Islanders from all backgrounds, contributing to enhanced linguistic and cultural appreciation and potentially providing a pathway to other languages, particularly French.”

Jersey has a strong connection to its roots through its own indigenous language. The learning of or about Jèrriais for all school children can enhance a sense of belonging in Jersey and provide meaningful contexts for language acquisition for all.



The new Language Policy for Jersey Education

This new policy has been collaboratively developed by a working group of educators, leaders, and an external expert. The Policy was taken to public consultations in September 2021 and finalised based on feedback from key stakeholder groups.

The Policy includes the following areas:

- The research base in which the Policy is grounded
- The roles and responsibilities of Jersey educators in upholding the Language Policy
- Collaboration between stakeholders in implementing the Language Policy
- Educational practices for a holistic approach to multilingualism in schools
- Responsibilities for tracking and reporting language proficiency
- Monitoring and reviewing the Language Policy

Visit gov.je/languagepolicy

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