



Jersey Schools Review Framework – Independent Report of Le Rocquier School

La Grande Route de St Clement
St Clement
Jersey
JE2 6QP

Headteacher: Mr Andrew Adkin
Review date: 28-30 March 2023

Summary

This is a dynamic, happy, and constantly improving school, which serves its pupils increasingly well. The school's motto of 'Learn, Respect and Succeed' underpins daily life at Le Rocquier.

Pupils who leave the school at 16 do so with relevant qualifications which help them progress to their chosen areas of further study or training. On the way, they enjoy many positive and encouraging experiences which broaden their horizons and make firm progress. They are perceptive and thoughtful. Leaders are successfully tackling inconsistencies in the quality of teaching across the school. This process is working but still has some way to go.

Pupils are ready to learn. They make strong progress, and remember what they have learned, particularly when the teaching is at its best. Sometimes the teaching is brilliant. At other times, however, staff control lessons too tightly. This reduces the pupils' opportunities to work things out for themselves or take their learning as far as they could. The school has appropriate systems for meeting the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), although these are not always consistently used or managed tightly enough to be fully effective.

Parents' views about the school are mixed. Many say the school provides very well for their children, who really thrive. Others report that misbehaviour can be disruptive. Some parents report feeling that staff seem too busy to give their child the attention needed and sometimes that they, as parents, cannot easily give their views. However, many parents value the high levels of pastoral care on offer for their child.

Pupils' behaviour around the school is typically sociable and very considerate. Any occasional lapses are usually dealt with effectively. However, pupils report variations in how staff manage their behaviour, or help them if they have any problems. Leaders have been successful in reducing the numbers of short suspensions of pupils, but need to take this further.

Le Rocquier is a caring place and has strong procedures for looking after its most vulnerable pupils. Pupils are safeguarded very well indeed and feel safe in school.

Full report

Achievement

- Leaders focus on adding value and ensuring that pupils make strong progress towards their GCSE examinations. Across almost all subjects, the Year 11 cohort of 2022 achieved soundly from their starting points and left the school with pleasing results. This enabled them to move on to relevant courses with post 16 providers, almost all at A Level or equivalent.
- Nevertheless, in those GCSEs, boys did not do as well as girls, nor as well as boys in other Jersey 11-16 schools in several subjects. Some subjects are chosen disproportionately by boys, and vice versa.
- The 2023 Year 11 cohort has performed well in many respects. Assessments show the pupils have made rapid gains in some subjects and a steady improvement in others. Pupils learn well in usually appropriately focused lessons. They reported that they generally feel well-prepared for their GCSEs, while knowing that the proof will be in the examination results themselves.
- Year 11 pupils leave the school with a relevant record of achievement, including the curriculum vitae each has written.
- Across the school, pupils learn effectively in most subjects and lessons. Art and photography for example, are strengths of the school. Generally, the improvements made in subjects last year are being sustained. The gaps in achievement between boys and girls are being closed in Key Stage 3, especially in English and mathematics. In both these subjects, tests show pupils have made strong progress in Years 7 to 9.
- There are no very weak subjects. However, school leaders are aware that improvements in pupils' learning are needed in some, namely computing and design technology. Leaders have worked hard addressing the gaps in some pupils' learning in science, caused by the recent staffing turbulence. Recent mock examinations evidence current Key Stage 4 pupils making better progress in this subject as a result.
- Some pupils with SEND do not achieve as consistently as they might due to teaching not meeting their needs well enough. Leaders need a closer analysis and oversight of the overall performance of different pupil groups to improve this. There are several robust and successful strategies, such as mentoring, to support some pupils needing extra help and support. However, leaders do not analyse in sufficient detail how well pupils with SEND learn and what may be either assisting them or holding them back.
- Pupils' aspirations are rising, as are those of the staff for them. These higher aspirations are shown, for instance, in the joint discussions by staff and pupils setting more ambitious GCSE targets.
- Pupils joining the school in Year 7 make a promising start. They are generally happy and learning well.

Behaviour, personal development and welfare

- Pupils' behaviour around the school, and when they arrive and leave, is generally safe and considerate of others. They are friendly, polite, and typically good-humoured. Pupils are happy and confident to talk about what they have been learning and doing.
- Within lessons, pupils are usually attentive and self-disciplined, especially when the lesson engages them well. Their attention can slide when teaching is less interesting, or the teacher does not give them enough to do for themselves. In these cases, pupils can tend to become passive and their participation is minimised.

- Just as often, however, pupils find the work very appealing. In a Year 8 practical science lesson, pupils working in groups really enjoyed working hard and safely on an experiment to separate liquids from solids. They were highly motivated and did not need excessive supervision, despite having to be careful and apply safety rules with the equipment they were using. This meant the teacher could focus closely on answering their questions and helping their learning.
- Nevertheless, some staff manage behaviour inconsistently. As pupils say, 'What happens depends on the teacher.' Some teachers are quicker to give punishments or rewards than others. Pupils feel that if they report misbehaviour, it is not always stopped. Pupils astutely pointed out to reviewers that misbehaviour in some lessons is caused by the work set being too hard or too easy, which can be frustrating.
- Staff check punctuality to lessons correctly, and pupils are usually on time. Leaders work diligently to ensure attendance is broadly in line with the island average, which is still lower than the pre Covid era. This reduction is mainly caused by an increase in the numbers of pupils who are persistently absent.
- Boys and girls, and other groups such as those eligible for Jersey Premium, receive behaviour rewards approximately in proportion to their numbers. Leaders analyse this helpfully. Older pupils expressed that they would like more reward points in line with their younger peers.
- Assemblies, held in year groups and houses, are used well to build community, and reinforce important learning. For example, certificates are awarded to pupils with full attendance. Sponsored events for charities are well supported. Pupils like the house system which they say promotes friendly competition and gives them confidence to participate in different purposeful activities.
- Around the school, and in many classrooms, there are attractive and interactive displays and other resources which help pupils to think about, and celebrate, their learning and the opportunities available. There are also some first-class bespoke facilities for subject teaching. These all help support pupils' positive attitudes and, in turn, their learning.
- Although improvements have been made, there are still too many suspensions of pupils. These involve a relatively small number of individuals but use up considerable amounts of staff time and can be unsettling. Suspensions are reducing, but leaders should continue to implement alternative options when appropriate.

Effectiveness of teaching

- Lessons are generally well structured, so pupils settle well and know what to do. Teachers typically show strong subject expertise. They believe more in their pupils' potential, and the pupils increasingly share this confidence. Subject leaders and their teams show high levels of enthusiasm for their subjects. Consequently, they can challenge pupils and provide engaging experiences in lessons. This is happening more and more.
- For example, in Year 7 geography, pupils were much enthused by fieldwork on the school site helping them to assess different microclimates, using equipment such as anemometers. Staff helped them to use relevant vocabulary and literacy skills well, in conjunction with the English department, to describe and compare the 'best' microclimates. In Year 11, pupils were highly engaged in a lesson about addiction, sharing ideas with each other at a high level. They were supported correctly by the knowledgeable staff. Their learning was rapid.

- Another key positive example is physical education, where, across year groups, pupils actively participate to a promising standard in an inclusive range of different sports. These are fairly arranged for boys and girls, different groups and aptitudes, as well as those with SEND. Pupils are continually active in PE lessons, and enjoy building their skills together in different sports, sometimes usefully setting themselves targets to beat their previous best.
- However, these positive points are not always present. Too often, teachers control and manage the class more than is necessary, which restricts pupils' need to think for themselves.
- In most lessons, work is well pitched to meet pupils' needs, but not always. At times pupils have work which is too easy or too hard. The school is developing teachers' use of feedback to pupils, to help them improve their work and learning there and then. This should continue to be a priority. Subject leaders and staff are also developing their use of assessment, to raise expectations further still of the grades pupils might achieve at GCSE. Leaders know there is scope to continue to refine and develop this understanding.
- Teaching has been rendered less effective at times when it has been hard to recruit new staff into key positions and lessons are not covered by the permanent teacher. In general, however, the staff vacancy rate is not high.
- Staff ensure suitable provision for the small number of pupils who are at an early stage of learning English, or who require help with reading. These pupils are supported effectively to access the curriculum and school life.
- Staff make widespread, well-planned, use of external agencies and visitors to the school. They provide many inspiring visits out and residential activities to help pupils to learn better. For instance, the Jersey Music Service works effectively alongside school staff to provide interesting whole class teaching in instruments include saxophone, cornet, and trombone. A recent religious studies visit to Jersey Islamic Centre Mosque helped pupils to understand the beliefs and practices within Islam better.

Effectiveness of leadership and management

- Senior leaders and staff know their school and their evaluation of how well it is doing is honest and accurate, though it has a few gaps as mentioned below. There is no complacency. The headteacher and his team use their self-evaluation aptly to decide what should be in the school improvement plan. Consequently, this plan focuses tightly on the most important things. It is well written and effectively used to bring the targeted improvements.
- These processes are helped by the fact that school leaders use impartial, external advice well. This helps them to see the school as it is and make the needed changes.
- The headteacher has made wise decisions about how to organise the work of the school's senior and middle leadership teams. There have been a series of changes to suit the school's needs at different times, which have helped drive improvements.
- Senior and middle leaders are generally proactive, self-motivated and work well together. Each carries out their designated responsibilities suitably. They can be very positive role models for other staff. However, the challenges with staffing recruitment restricted leaders' capacity to do all the work that they have targeted, so they have had to choose what to accomplish first. Their chosen priorities are sensible and usually shown in the school improvement plan. However, naturally this leaves some work incomplete and so inconsistencies remain. Some areas that concern pupils, including aspects of behaviour and teaching, have been left unresolved or semi-resolved for periods of time.

- The school offers a broad curriculum. The range of subjects in Key Stage 3 is relevant and well organised, with a helpful focus on expressive subjects. It is unfortunate, nevertheless, that staffing problems mean that when dance is on the timetable, music is not and vice versa. This leads to some lack of continuity of learning in these subjects. At the same time, it is also right to recognise the school's success in providing creative subjects so extensively. At Key Stage 4 the school offers a wide choice of academic and applied courses. Pupils appreciate that there are fully four option blocks, allowing them each a bespoke set of subjects.
- There is some variation in how effectively subjects are managed. However, this is diminishing, and pupils are increasingly well served in every subject. Staff training is well organised.
- Leaders spend Jersey Premium funding purposefully ensuring that these pupils generally progress as well as their classmates.
- The ARC provisions for pupils with a record of need are suitably managed, with good staffing levels ensuring that these pupils typically fare well.
- The school focuses usefully on the individual needs of pupils with SEND. The hard work of teachers and teaching assistants to support pupils with SEND can be very effective but is sometimes less so. In some lessons, staff do not interact to offer the direct and precise support pupils with SEND require, so their learning is reduced. A more thorough analysis of overall trends and patterns is required so that leaders can plan more efficiently.
- Provision for safeguarding and child protection is well structured. Leaders follow all necessary safer recruitment policies for staff and offer regular safeguarding training and updates for staff. The school's systems are well-established, promoting a culture of high vigilance. Staff keep helpful and accurate records, sometimes about very complex circumstances. As a result, leaders are well informed and able to intervene and protect pupils when needed. Staff work well with outside agencies, challenging them when necessary to secure additional support for individual pupils.
- The school's very successful pastoral support is consistently well managed. Pupils who access this are looked after very well. Consequently, they typically feel safe, listened to and welcome.
- Leaders maintain meticulous individual records of individual pupils. However, improved analyses of suspensions and why they happen, will better support the reduction of them. The same applies to analyses of patterns of pupils' attendance. The school has sound procedures for reducing absence, but these focus too much on supporting individuals rather than dealing with any patterns in the causes of absence.
- The curriculum in PSHE is well structured to promote pupils' personal development over time. Pupils are supported to better understand how to avoid potentially dangerous situations including keeping themselves safe online. Equality and diversity are promoted effectively, and pupils learn respect and tolerance. Leaders and staff arrange useful careers and options advice, including, just before this review, a successful careers fair.
- Leaders proactively manage a broad programme of extra-curricular sport, arts, and other exciting activities for all year groups. These have grown back very well since lockdown. Pupils like them and many join in. Pupils entitled to Jersey Premium are involved proportionately to their numbers in the school in this programme.
- During the review, a girls' football team jubilantly won a tournament against other Jersey schools. Boys and girls play football in reasonably equal numbers. Conversely, other activities which pupils can choose to do are much more popular with girls than boys and vice versa. The school has analysed this but has not yet considered whether there are any barriers to attending the activities that may affect boys and girls differently.

- Leaders have thoughtfully revised the appraisal system for teaching staff this year. It is tightly managed and timely, ensuring staff discuss and agree their personal targets then collaborate with their manager to seek to reach them.
- The governing body is appropriately organised and developing its role as the community's and parents' representatives, holding leaders to account. Members see the potential at this time in engaging more closely with parents.

Recommendations

The school should take the following actions:

1. Improve the management of the provision for pupils with SEND so that:
 - better analysis and awareness of patterns and trends in the learning of these pupils allows any issues or shortfalls to be efficiently addressed across the school
 - the work of teachers and teaching assistants is precisely targeted as needed in lessons to meet the pupils' particular needs.
2. Leaders should continue to improve the consistency in the quality of teaching and in the management of behaviour by:
 - ensuring all behaviour policies, rewards and sanctions are used fairly and equitably according to reasonable application of criteria
 - analysing any differences in the academic performance, attendance, behavioural records, take up of different subjects and activities by different pupil groups and then addressing any barriers to success and participation
 - analysing suspensions data more thoroughly so that these can be further reduced
 - supporting and guiding the staff in increasing pupils' consistent access to engaging and active lessons, which use the pupils' general propensity for positive behaviour
 - supporting staff to use ongoing assessment to set work in lessons at the right level for pupils' needs.
3. Provide further positive opportunities for parents to engage with leaders and governors so that their views are still more systematically heard and, as appropriate, acted upon.

Information about the school

Age range of pupils: 11-16

Gender of pupils: Mixed

Number of pupils on the school roll: 732

Headteacher: Mr Andrew Adkin

School telephone number: 01534 855876

School website: www.lerocquier.com

Contextual information

- Most pupils stay at the school for the full five years, but there is a little turbulence in the school roll. Some pupils leave the school at age 14 to attend school elsewhere, so the numbers of pupils in Years 10 and 11 are smaller than those in Years 7 to 9.
- There are slightly fewer boys than girls on roll.
- Almost two in every five pupils are entitled to the support of Jersey Premium. This figure has risen recently and is above the Jersey average.
- One fifth of pupils are assessed as having special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The school has two small ARC provisions.
- Approximately one third of pupils are multi-lingual learners. Most pupils speak English well.
- The school has its own governing body.

Information about the review

- Lessons were observed, for different lengths of time, across subjects and all year groups.
- Discussions were held with several groups of students about their work, the teaching, curriculum, behaviour, and the way the school looks after them.
- Extended discussions were held with school staff, including those in leadership positions at different levels, and those at an early career stage.
- A wide range of documents, including school evaluations and plans, and records related to child protection and safeguarding, was considered and discussed with leaders.
- Samples of pupils' work were scrutinised, often in lessons.
- A tour was made of the school's site to see its facilities, as well as discuss its security and safety. Safeguarding records and systems were reviewed.
- A group of Year 7 pupils read to reviewers and discussed their reading.
- Reviewers met with groups of pupils. In addition, pupils were observed, and informal conversations were held with pupils during break times, as they moved around the school, as they arrived in the morning and left the school at the end of the day.
- The school's published assessment and other data were analysed.
- Careful consideration was given to the results of surveys of parents and staff specifically done for this review.

The review team

Led by an experienced off-Island school adviser/inspector, there were a total of 8 reviewers 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.