



Jersey Schools Review Framework – Independent Report of FCJ Primary School

Deloraine Road
St Saviour
Jersey
JE2 7XB

Headteacher: Donna Lenzi
Review date: 16-18 January 2024

Summary

Leaders, staff, pupils, and parents are justly proud of their school which many keenly describe as being their 'second family'. The school's Christian ethos and the FCJ values of 'companionship, dignity, excellence, justice, gentleness and hope' are threaded throughout daily life and all that the school achieves. Pupils flourish in this exceptionally caring learning environment. The team of reviewers totally agree with one parent who spoke for many when they said,

'The teachers at FCJ work really hard to make each child's experience there a time to relish. They encourage pupils to grow and explore through a mix of traditional teaching and new technology. FCJ is a truly lovely primary school that very much cares.'

Passionate and inspiring senior leadership underpins the shared high aspirations and the strong academic achievement at FCJ. Pupils delight in their learning and over time they achieve very well here. The dedicated team of staff ensure that all pupils can benefit from a rich and engaging curriculum, enriched through a range of interesting activities and experiences. Leaders, governors and staff work hard as a cohesive team to continually refine and improve their school. Senior leaders know the school's strengths and its areas for further development well. They are rightly prioritising further modifications to the curriculum and ensuring that all teachers can respond to the needs of their pupils in line with the best examples in the school.

The school is a gold-level Rights Respecting School. Pupils' views and opinions are sought and valued, they have many different opportunities to experience leadership and considering the welfare and wellbeing of themselves and others is at the heart of school life.

Secure, trusting and respectful relationships between staff and pupils ensure that pupils feel very well supported and safe here. Staff know that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and all work together to keep pupils safe. The rights of the child are at the heart of all the school offers. Pupils recognise the care and investment shown in them and they in turn look out for each other. Their hunger for learning, excellent behaviour and impeccable manners make FCJ Primary School a very special place to be.

Full report

Achievement

- Warm, caring relationships, positive interactions and high expectations ensure that the children are actively engaged in their learning. The progress children make through Reception classes is monitored well. This ensures staff have a secure understanding of children's individual strengths and their next steps. Purposeful learning activities, coupled with effective adult-pupil interactions, ensure children make strong progress from their starting points, particularly in numeracy, literacy and their personal and social skills. Staff ensure that the children in Reception are well prepared for the transition to Key Stage 1.
- Pupils develop positive attitudes towards reading. Leaders are committed towards the teaching of phonics and they ensure pupils get to read suitably decodable books. Over time most pupils in Reception and Year 1 are supported to become confident readers. Leaders are aware that in some areas sharper ongoing assessment and more consistent interventions from teachers and teaching assistants would support pupils who may be struggling with their reading to make even stronger progress.
- Assessment data reports demonstrate a consistent trend that higher-than-average proportions of pupils are working securely across reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Key Stage 2. Whilst there was a slight dip in reading outcomes last year, pupils' achievement was still in line with Island averages. The review team's visits to lessons coupled with their scrutiny of current pupils' work demonstrates the many strengths in achievement in the older year groups. Pupils typically make strong progress in lower Key Stage 2 and rapid progress in upper Key Stage 2 across the curriculum.
- Analysis of the assessment data for Key Stage 1 pupils last year initially suggests a dip in standards. However, these figures for last year need interpreting carefully due to contextual circumstances. Consequently, statistical comparison over time needs careful interpretation. Our lesson visits and scrutiny of current pupils' work demonstrate that pupils make sound progress in English and mathematics across Key Stage 1.
- Strong relationships ensure that the small number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) across all year groups make progress similar to that of their peers. They settle well into Reception where their educational, social and emotional needs are identified quickly. As a result, children with SEND are provided with learning activities closely matched to their needs at an early stage of their school life.
- Progress continues across Key Stage 1 for pupils with SEND, particularly in their personal, social and emotional development because of the individualised care and nurture provided by all staff. As with their peers, the rate of academic progress increases for multi-lingual pupils and pupils with SEND through upper Key Stage 2, where they make notable and rapid improvements.
- The curriculum at FCJ ensures that pupils enjoy the challenge of learning and develop a thirst for knowledge. In discussions about their work pupils are typically articulate, confident, and knowledgeable. Many are impressive particularly when explaining and applying their learning from humanities and religious education lessons.
- Pupils' achievement in PSHE is a significant strength. The culture and ethos of the school underpins the high levels of empathy, respect, and the sense of justice that pupils develop. They can confidently discuss challenging subjects, such as racism and sexism, clearly linking these to their rights and responsibilities. They are being well prepared to be model citizens.

Behaviour, personal development and welfare

- The values of 'companionship, dignity, excellence, justice, gentleness and hope' significantly enrich and enhance daily life and the school curriculum offer. Staff nurture pupils' wellbeing and their sense of community. Pupils told us that they are proud to be part of the 'FCJ family' and they blossom here. They particularly enthuse about their own and their friends' achievements in music and drama here.
- Staff and pupils are rightly proud of the school achieving its gold-level Rights Respecting Schools award. The promotion of children's rights, pupil voice and participation happen daily here. Pupils learn to confidently discuss their rights and responsibilities and to respect and value those of others too. Their singing of the school's rights respecting song, sung to the tune of 'We will rock you', was truly uplifting.
- Positive relationships, trust and respect are nurtured throughout the school from the day pupils start in early years. Consequently, pupils feel secure and trust staff to respond to any concerns that they may have. Leaders know each of their pupils as individuals and tailor support and care to meet their needs.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is first-class. Staff here ensure that pupils know the high standards expected of them and routines and rules are well known and followed. Pupils recognise the difference between unkindness and bullying, both of which are very rare here. Older pupils told us that they value how leaders use restorative justice to support improvements in behaviour. As one Year 6 pupil explained, 'we are all companions, so we support each other.'
- Leaders promote the value of regular attendance and punctuality well, taking proactive action when necessary. Pupils' enjoyment and pride in their school is reflected in attendance figures which are above the average for Jersey and rising.
- Highly effective religious education ensures pupils are well-informed about different faiths and cultures. They can confidently recall and discuss their learning about Christianity, Hinduism, and Judaism demonstrating genuine interest and respect for their different traditions and festivals. Equalities are promoted well here.
- Leaders have a carefully planned personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum which is delivered well. Teachers here are as passionately committed to ensuring the personal development of each child as they are to ensuring their academic progress. Staff are not afraid to tackle sensitive issues and pupils gain confidence to maturely discuss and reflect on issues such as racism and different types of relationships.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe, including when swimming, near the roads and when online. Staff and parent surveys reflect very positively how safe pupils feel here.
- Learning in lessons is enriched through the range of additional activities, trips, and visitors to help pupils learn about the wider world and growing up. All teaching staff work hard to provide an extensive range of extra-curricular clubs for pupils which they value. A minority of parents told us that they would like to see more sporting opportunities after school.
- The school offers a huge range of opportunities for pupils to take on responsibility and promote good citizenship. Pupils delight in the many chances they get to play an active role in school life. They enthused to us about becoming a house captain, digital leader or sports captain and participating in the many competitions. The school also offers further opportunities for child-led committees including the safety squad, eco-committee and charity committee. Pupils are particularly proud of the achievements of the school development squad which they described as being, 'like a school council but with Rights Respecting Schools all linked in!'

Effectiveness of teaching

- A focus on kindness and gentleness permeates all teaching across FCJ Primary. Where teaching is most effective, gentle humour and warm relationships encourage all pupils to confidently engage and try their best.
- Mutual respect and trust are clearly evident in all classrooms. Teachers have high expectations and familiar classroom routines resulting in well-structured lessons. Teachers are determined to support all of their pupils to achieve their best.
- In Reception effective planning and skilled teaching ensure children gain understanding across the curriculum. A blend of discrete teaching and purposeful play activities in the stimulating environment typically promote strong engagement and sustained concentration. Reviewers were impressed with how children cooperatively play together and how staff also actively encourage their imaginations and to learn to be more independent over time.
- Teachers value and promote early reading well. Typically, the teaching of phonics in Reception and Year 1 is strong and staff ensure that pupils practice their reading skills through access to suitably decodable books. However, further training is needed to help all staff to be equally confident to support children to apply their phonics when they find their reading challenging.
- The best teaching occurs when teachers ensure teaching assistants are well-briefed in both the subject matter and the needs of the pupils. Together staff carefully check on pupils' understanding as they progress through lessons. This helps them to swiftly identify any gaps in knowledge or misconceptions that pupils may have. Staff then reshape tasks and/or their explanations to meet pupils' needs. Where this happens, it significantly boosts pupils' confidence and their learning. Leaders are aware of areas where these aspects of teaching are less well developed and are working to address them.
- Teaching for pupils with SEND is most effective where staff plan and provide learning activities in small carefully organised segments. In these lessons, staff use a range of strategies successfully to engage and motivate pupils so that they rapidly build their knowledge and skills. For example, we noted how pupils with SEND in the Year 6 classes quickly grew in confidence in their understanding of ratio, using mathematical manipulatives to calculate ratios.
- Teachers make good use of information technology to engage pupils. Pupils were keen to tell us how much they enjoy using their iPads in lessons. We witnessed how effectively they were used to consolidate learning and apply subject knowledge. For example, in a Key Stage 2 gymnastics lesson where using their iPads pupils confidently reflected on their learning seeking to refine and develop their body positions and balance.
- The most effective teachers' planning has a clear focus on the sequence of key knowledge, skills and experiences pupils gain within each subject. This gives teachers the confidence to challenge all pupils through promoting oracy, discussion, and analysis. As a result, pupils engage in deep and reflective thinking. Impressive examples of this were seen in the older year groups, for example in mathematics, English and religious education lessons. In some foundation subjects there are minor refinements needed to curriculum planning to make teaching and learning as strong as they are in these areas.

Effectiveness of leadership and management

- The headteacher and her senior team are inspirational. Their dedication, infectious enthusiasm and shared vision drive the high standards achieved across the school. Passionately committed to providing the very best they can for all of their pupils, leaders are tenacious in their pursuit of additional resources and approaches to continually improve provision. They particularly value and benefit from the support and guidance of the FCJ Educational Trust.
- The governing body are a committed team who are knowledgeable about the school. Together governors possess a wealth of relevant skills honed from their experiences in educational, legal, financial, and safeguarding careers. This enables them to offer valuable support and challenge to leaders. Governors share the headteacher's ambitious aims for the school and offer support and challenge to the school well.
- Senior leaders understand the school's strengths and areas for further development well. They apply their expertise and knowledge of the school to create pertinent plans for improvement, involving training and seeking outside support where necessary. This approach ensures that appropriate actions are prioritised and then evaluated effectively.
- Working together governors and senior leaders have forged a highly dedicated and professional staff who share the headteacher's passion to deliver the best possible outcomes for every pupil. Standards are consistently high and pupils flourish because they receive first-class pastoral care and increasingly effective teaching. One parent spoke for many when they commented: '... the school strikes the right balance between pushing children academically in a caring, nurturing environment where the children feel safe and at ease.'
- There is a shared drive to ensure that the very highest standards of teaching and learning are at the heart of the school's work. Leaders lead by example and provide effective challenge and support for teachers and source additional relevant training when necessary. Staff morale here is high and staff value their professional development. They are open to new ideas, embrace challenge and the opportunity to refine and improve their practice.
- Teachers and support staff are united in their support of the headteacher. All staff with whom we met, or who responded to the survey, think the school is well led and managed. They all confirm that leaders and governors take staff members' wellbeing and workload into account, and they feel well supported and proud to be part of the school.
- Governors and leaders ensure that effective use is made of the additional funding for specific groups of pupils. Strong leadership of SEND and the provision for any pupils who may be vulnerable ensures that these pupils are well supported and typically make strong progress from their starting points.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Well-organised systems are managed methodically and an effective team approach involving governors, leaders and office staff ensures that all pupils are kept safe. For example, regular and appropriate levels of training for all staff is provided on safeguarding matters. Consequently, staff understand and carry out the school's policy and procedures well, ensuring a culture of vigilance.
- Clear and comprehensive record keeping supports work with external agencies, where appropriate, to help vulnerable pupils and their families. Leaders carry out detailed risk assessments and regular checks on all aspects of health and safety. This includes reviewing trips and visits and working with governors to conduct regular reviews of site safety. Staff are appropriately qualified in first aid.
- The school ensures pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted particularly well. The FCJ values are the school's values and are threaded particularly

well through all aspects of the life of the school to promote teamwork, reflection and celebrate success.

Recommendations

The school should take the following actions:

1. Enable further improvements to the effectiveness of teaching by fine tuning curriculum plans in the foundation subjects to improve the sequence of key knowledge and subject-specific vocabulary.
2. Ensure more consistent and sustained progress is made in lessons, particularly in KS1 by:
 - ensuring 'in-the-moment' formative assessment techniques are used more consistently, in line with best practice observed within the school
 - continuing to support teaching assistants with training to enhance how they can support their target pupils within early reading and the foundation subjects.

Information about the school

Age range of pupils: 3 – 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

Number of pupils on the school roll: 266

Headteacher: Donna Lenzi

School telephone number: 01534 723063

School website: www.fcj.sch.je

Contextual information

FCJ Primary School is an independent non selective fee-paying Catholic school drawing pupils from across the Island. It was initially founded by the Society of Faithful Companions of Jesus as FCJ Convent School in 1911. The school completed a major rebuilding programme in recent years and is now housed in modern facilities in St Saviour. FCJ Primary School is part of the FCJ Educational Trust which consists of four schools in England together with this one in Jersey.

- The school currently consists of 13 classes. At the time of this review there were two classes in each of Years R, 2, 4, 5 and 6 and one class in the pre-School and Years 1 and 3.
- There are a very small number of pupils eligible for Jersey Premium.
- A very small minority of pupils speak English as an additional language.

- The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is 6% which is well below the Jersey average.
- The school is run by the governing body which works with the headteacher and senior leadership team.

Information about the review

Alongside this review, the team also conducted an inspection of the school against the Jersey Standards for Independent Schools (JSIS). This report has been published separately.

The governing body and senior leaders also run FCJ Pre-school which provides nursery provision for 3-year-olds. Being a separately registered provision, this is subject to its own regulatory reviews. Therefore, the quality and standards within the pre-school provision was not considered during this Jersey School Review.

- The school's published assessment information and data were analysed and taken into account. The review team scrutinised samples of pupils' work in reading, writing, mathematics, science, art and humanities subjects.
- Visits to lessons were made in all years from Reception to Year 6 to observe teaching and learning and to look at pupils' work across a range of subjects. Some of these visits were accompanied by school leaders. In addition, a small group of pupils were heard reading to a familiar adult.
- Pupils were observed during break times and as they moved around the school. Discussions were held with groups of pupils about their views of school life and the way that the school ensures their safety and wellbeing.
- Meetings were held with leaders at various levels, teaching and support staff and with the site manager. The lead reviewer held meetings with representatives of the board of governors and a representative of the FCJ Educational Trust and reviewed documentation linked to the governance of the school.
- A wide range of documents, policies and curriculum plans were considered. A tour was made of the school's site to check its security and safety. Safeguarding records and staff recruitment files were sampled and reviewed.
- The review considered the results of surveys of staff and parents.

The review team

The review team consisted of four reviewers. The review was led by a senior adviser from the Department for Children, Young People, Education and Skills who is also experienced off-Island inspector.

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.