

**Validation report:** La Mare de Carteret High School

**Validation dates:** 8 February 2016

**Managing Inspector:** Terry Carr

**Type of school:** Secondary School

**Age range of learners:** 11-16

**Gender of learners:** Boys and girls

**Number on roll:** 410

## Introduction

The validation was carried out by a team of four HM Inspectors, who spent three days in the school observing lessons, talking with learners and looking at their work, engaging in discussions with staff, parents and partners, looking at school records and other documentation, and scrutinising responses to the pre-validation questionnaires.

## The context of the school

The school is non-selective and provides secondary education for students from nine of the ten parishes in Guernsey. Approximately 58 percent of the students are boys and 42 percent are girls. The school has identified 40 percent of its students as having special educational needs.

The headteacher has been in post since April 2012. Since August 2014 all of the assistant headteachers, 13 teachers, and three learning support assistants have been appointed.

The school has been successful in reducing the number of exclusions and improving attendance over the last three years. The average attendance level of each cohort of student has improved from the time they started in the school in Year 7 to the end of last term. The overall attendance rate has improved by 2.7 percentage points and stands at 94 percent.

## **How well do young people learn and achieve?**

### **Learners' experiences**

Relationships within the school are very positive. Students are very well behaved in class and cooperate very well with teachers. In corridors and social areas, they behave very well and act responsibly. Students are polite and articulate. They appreciate the range of opportunities provided by the school and the benefits that they will gain through their involvement.

Almost all students are motivated and eager participants in their learning. They work very effectively in lessons and are respectful of each other's views and contributions. Students are particularly enthusiastic and motivated when a wide range of approaches are used to engage them in exploring and discussing their learning. Students respond very positively to working collaboratively and engaging in activities associated with cooperative learning. Similarly, they benefit from opportunities to work independently and take responsibility for their learning. Learners' experiences are particularly stimulating in art, English, history and religious education. Students are making effective use of information and communications technology (ICT) in their learning through, for example using the Internet for research and using computers to access a wider range of activities. In music, students are motivated very well through the increased use of digital equipment. The attractive displays of students' work in classrooms and corridors help to motivate them and raise their expectations. The broad range of activities and experiences planned beyond the classroom motivate students and enrich their learning, for example, across sport, music and drama.

The way in which teachers share the purpose of lessons and provide high quality feedback on written work is increasingly helping students to identify their strengths and next steps in learning. Students are aware of their targets in subjects across the school. The regular opportunities for peer and self-assessment support learning in almost all classes. Most students, including those who are more vulnerable are making good progress in lessons from their prior level of attainment.

### **Improvements in performance**

Students make good progress each year from Year 7 to Year 11 in developing their personal and social skills. They develop their skills and talents through participating in a wide range of enriching activities.

Students have opportunities to develop and demonstrate leadership at each stage. Their leadership skills are developed through acting as representatives of their form class, being members of the junior leadership team, as subject prefects or having further school wide responsibilities. Senior students act as mentors and tutors for younger students. Those studying physical education and drama lead other students within the school and at neighbouring schools. The Junior Leadership Team act as a consultative group who have weekly meetings and regular discussions with the school's senior leadership team on a wide range of issues. They set out their objectives within their constitution at the start of the term and have been working to achieve these. Individual students make their mark by being successful ambassadors for the school and for young people on the island.

Students have responsible attitudes in school and develop a growing awareness of life off the island through a wide range of trips and excursions. They participate well in democratic processes such as voting for representatives on the Guernsey Youth Forum. Students are making a significant contribution to the school's work and that of the wider community. They demonstrate empathy for others through raising money for local and international charities, and a global awareness through their links with students in Sri Lanka. They participate in sponsored events to raise school funds, support local senior citizens care homes and raise funds for international causes such as the Rotary Shoebox Appeal and a Haitian charity.

Students have been very successful in a wide range of sporting and outdoor activities with notable successes in rugby, basketball and netball. They have strong links with local sports clubs in rugby, basketball, athletics and football and take part in competitive fixtures across a number of sports at all stages. The school offers a wide range of activities beyond traditional competitive sports, for example, skiing, surfing and cycling. Students play a significant role in Guernsey teams at inter-island sporting events with recent medal winners in last year's island games. Those taking part in the Duke of Edinburgh Award have a good record of completing the programme and developing resilience and other life skills. Students also gain awards from the John Muir Trust.

Students have been successful in a range of cultural activities. They are developing their talents in the performing arts and by taking part in debating, mathematics, science, spelling, and technology competitions. A few young people have been identified as digital leaders, raising awareness of the school's push to improve the digital literacies and information and research skills of young people.

Senior students benefit from work experience placements, which gives them a better understanding of local employment prospects. The school's partners bring professional and specialist expertise to learning. Senior students are involved in providing valuable advice when younger students choose subjects. For example, students in Year 11 presented to their peers in Year 9 at assembly. They gave honest advice about their own experiences when making subject choices at an earlier stage in their school career.

### **Progress and attainment**

Students' progress and standards of attainment have improved in all core subjects over the last three years as a result of improved teachers' and students' expectations, better quality teaching and tracking and monitoring of students' attendance and progress.

In English, mathematics and science, the majority of students enter the school with attainment levels significantly lower than the Bailiwick's expectations. For example, this session approximately 50 percent of Year 7 were below the expected standard in reading; 70 percent were below the standard in writing; 63 percent were below the standard in mathematics; and 32 percent were below the standard in science. Nevertheless, by the end of Key Stage 3 about 40 percent of students in English and science and 35 percent in mathematics made the expected progress of two full

curriculum levels by the end of this stage. Students continued to progress in Key Stage 4.

The attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 has increased each year over the last three years. For each of the last three years, almost all students gained at least five A\* to G GCSE awards when they left school. During this period, the percentage of students who achieved five or more A\* to C awards increased from approximately 35 percent to 45 percent; and the percentage who gained five or more A\* to C awards, including English and mathematics, increased from 24 percent to 32 percent. This latter figure is lower than the Bailiwick average of 67 percent. Last year's attainment data shows that students with high levels of attendance performed well in examinations. Fifty percent of students who attended for 90 percent of the time or more achieved five A\*-C awards including English and mathematics.

## **How well does the school support young people to develop and learn?**

### **Teaching for effective learning**

Overall, the quality of teaching is very good. In almost all lessons, the learning climate is calm, purposeful and positive. Students arrive on time and settle quickly, ready to learn. In most subjects, teachers plan lessons well to ensure a wide range of teaching approaches which encourage high levels of engagement and motivation. A significant number of staff make effective and stimulating use of the environment to support learning in interesting ways. Most teachers use a range of visual, kinaesthetic and auditory support well to enhance students' learning. In a few lessons, learning was not well paced. In these lessons the range of activities was narrow and the level of challenge less appropriate. For example, in science, students would benefit from more opportunities to develop their science skills by coming up with their own ideas to improve experiments.

The purpose of learning is clear in almost all lessons. Teachers share learning intentions consistently and in most lessons, set challenging but realistic targets which ensure that expectations of students are high. Teachers make regular checks on progress with targets and use incentives such as merits and praise well to motivate students to make progress. Teachers' planning consistently makes reference to building on previous learning. Explanations and instructions are well considered, taking account of relevant or real-life experiences to support students' understanding of tasks. For example, Year 9 students were learning about language and life during Shakespearian times and comparing this with modern English. Students investigated the implications of pay-day loans in Year 11 mathematics and experimental work in Year 11 science led to simulated diagnoses of diabetes and kidney disease. In their planning, staff indicate clearly where learning experiences and activities are matched to students' differing needs. Teachers and support staff use the helpful information they receive about students, including their special educational needs, talents and abilities to plan learning activities well. Lesson plans identify different levels of challenge and support for individual young people. Teachers provide appropriate opportunities for young people who have special educational needs to succeed.

In most lessons, the relaxed and supportive relationships between staff and students and the use of stimulating and active learning activities leads to enjoyment in learning. In the most effective lessons in creative arts, English, the humanities, physical education, religious education and technology, good quality questioning provides a high level of challenge and enables young people to develop critical thinking skills about their learning. In most lessons, staff create good opportunities for young people to express their views. The views of students in lessons are valued and teachers respond very positively to what they say. Staff respond sensitively to incorrect responses and encourage students to explore their answers further. A few teachers could develop further their use of questioning to challenge students more. They could extend students' thinking by asking appropriate open-ended questions. Departments could evaluate and review lessons to develop a shared understanding and approach to the development of critical thinking skills. Young people would also benefit from additional time to think and consider their responses to more challenging questions.

Most teachers use ICT effectively to provide support and challenge and ensure a brisk pace of learning. They do this by using timers, sound prompts, laptop and tablet computers, digital cameras, interactive white boards and visual cues to keep students on task. In many lessons teachers use presentation software well to support students' understanding and minimise barriers to reading and comprehension.

### **Meeting learning needs**

The school is very successful at meeting students' learning needs. Almost all staff and partners place considerable emphasis on planning tasks, activities and resources to support the differing needs of learners. They use a wide range of effective strategies to support students' progress. In planning resources to support learning, almost all teachers take account of relevance, age, stage and barriers to learning such as literacy and specific learning difficulties. The school's inclusive approaches and 'teach-in' sessions equip teachers well with a helpful range of strategies to support students.

The school has a clear, well-embedded cycle of intervention based on comprehensive information gained from its associated primary schools. This helps the inclusion team to plan individual and group support programmes which ensure that students get appropriate help when they need it. Information about all students with difficulties is shared with staff prior to students starting secondary school. The inclusion department uses more specialist tests well to identify students' abilities and challenges in reading, writing, spelling and comprehension. The school has recognised that the most vulnerable students would benefit from earlier identification of their needs prior to starting secondary school and the provision of enhanced transitions to help these young people to form effective relationships with staff and peers.

The effective inclusion manager and her team have developed specialist roles within the team to target more effectively interventions for particular groups of students. These roles are clear and focused on key areas of need within the school. The school is supported well by a number of agencies and partners with specialist skills. They work closely and effectively with the heads of year and inclusion team to provide well-targeted specialist support for the most vulnerable students. Partners provide bespoke packages of support for young people within school and for their families, and

a few provide advice in personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) lessons and in assemblies on relevant issues such as emotional wellbeing, healthy lifestyles and sexual health.

Students with identified special educational needs have individual learning plans (ILPs) with targets in literacy and numeracy. These are regularly reviewed with students and take account of teachers' views on their progress. This session, most students who needed ILPs to help them to make progress have achieved their targets in literacy and numeracy. Targets are reviewed regularly and shared with parents and students. Students with social, emotional and behavioural needs have pastoral support plans with targets which are helping them to manage their anxieties and behaviour.

## **Curriculum**

The rationale for the curriculum supports the school's recently renewed values of Attend, Aspire and Achieve. The design of the curriculum also reflects the Bailiwick's curriculum statement and the Education Department's vision outlined in Today's Learners Tomorrow's World. The curriculum provides all students with opportunities for them to develop as successful learners, effective contributors, responsible citizens and confident individuals.

Students in Years 7 to 9 follow a broad and balanced curriculum. A strong feature of the school is the considerable investment in shaping the curriculum around the needs of learners. This inclusive ethos has resulted in creative and imaginative approaches to ensuring the curriculum is relevant, progressive and appropriately challenging. Students are given good advice and support to begin to make choices of subjects during Year 9. Through continued collaboration within the federation of secondary schools across the Bailiwick, a greater choice of courses is available to young people. In Years 10 and 11, young people follow a range of courses, most of which lead to examinations. Subjects include English, mathematics, science, French, humanities, creative arts, technology, religious education, careers education, physical education and games. The school offers pathways to meet the interests, needs and abilities of young people and help prepare them for life after school. They include the wide range of GCSE courses and a further seven courses are available from Guernsey College of Further Education. The school should continue to review the curriculum in the light of the developments within the federation and college provision. Working with partners, the school will want to continue to support young people to develop skills in a wide range of areas and in different learning environments. Planned, progressive opportunities that develop skills, capabilities and attributes of young people should be further developed.

The school works successfully with a range of partners who provide enriching experiences for young people. Commendably, the school has increased the range of opportunities available to young people to develop their confidence and gain accreditation for their skills such as through work with Southampton Football Club and the Football Association, the Duke of Edinburgh Award, the John Muir Award and with The Prince's Trust.

The school has appropriate transition arrangements for all students who join the school in Year 7, including a two day visit to the school. Information is shared well between the primary schools and the high school. To support the transition of older students, the school develops employability skills with Year 10 students by organising work placements. The school provides very helpful careers advice. Visits to the Sixth Form College and College of Further Education help students in Year 10 to consider their options and learn about the courses on offer. Staff from both institutions make helpful visits to the school to deliver a joint talk to parents and students about what they offer and this can be followed up by individual interviews.

The vocational guidance, provided by the school, careers advisor and work-related learning, is very effectively supporting young people to move on to positive destinations in higher and further education and employment. Links with employers provide experiences which support the curriculum and enhance young people's learning. This work is carefully planned by the head of careers supported by the careers advisor and focuses on developing a wider awareness of the world beyond school. Carefully constructed work placements are providing very valuable experiences for young people in preparing them for employment. Employers value the input from the careers advisor and the range of staff who support young people effectively while preparing for and undertaking work experience.

## **How well does the school improve the quality of its work?**

### **Improvement through self-evaluation**

The school is very successful at using self-evaluation procedures to continuously improve the quality of its work. The headteacher, other senior leaders and most middle leaders demonstrate a strong commitment to continuously improving the learning experiences and outcomes for students. This strong commitment to school improvement is evident through the rigour staff employ to monitor the progress of students from Year 7 to the end of Year 11. Most teachers reflect on the success of their lessons and adjust their plans accordingly for the next lessons. Commendably, senior leaders seek the views of students, parents, staff and partners as part of the school's evaluative activities.

Senior staff and middle leaders monitor the quality of lessons rigorously and discuss with teachers ways of improving practice. They frequently carry out joint observations of lessons. This good practice helps to calibrate staff judgements and spread the responsibility of monitoring the quality of lessons to departments. Practice which falls below expectations is followed up by managers. Commendably, managers use the progress which students make in lessons as the hallmark of a quality lesson. Senior leaders hold middle leaders and departments to account by carrying out rigorous annual reviews. The focus of these reviews is the attainment and progress of students. The reviews include analyses of data on students' attainment and progress, lesson observations, student surveys and in-depth scrutiny of students' written work. As a result of these reviews, targets are set for departments and follow up activities take place.

The school has very effective approaches to ensuring that sustainable improvements take place. Each area of the school has clear targets for improvement, individuals are

held to account for their area of responsibility and a well-defined communication structure ensures that progress is monitored closely. The findings from lesson observations are used to share good practice in the regular teach-ins held in the school. Other external training is based appropriately on the identified needs of staff. The school has an effective performance management system which is informed by the results of lesson observations and the progress students make in teachers' classes. New staff are mentored by experienced and skilled practitioners.

### **Leadership of improvement and change**

The headteacher demonstrates outstanding leadership skills. She has successfully developed the school's vision 'to attend, aspire and achieve' through consultation with staff and other stakeholders, and communicated it well across the school community. The headteacher has established sound working relationships across the school community and beyond and has gained the respect of staff, young people, parents and partners. She has very high expectations of all students and staff. Her robust, rigorous and persistent approach to securing improvement is evident in the high quality learning and teaching observed across the school and in the improvements in attendance, attainment and achievement. The headteacher is ably supported by the deputy headteacher and three assistant headteachers, each of whom bring different talents, skills, experience and drive to the senior leadership team (SLT). Individually, they carry out their remits very effectively. Collectively, they are a strong and dynamic team focused clearly on improving outcomes for young people. All members of the SLT maintain a teaching commitment and their teaching is a model of good practice. Heads of department have a crucial leadership role and are increasingly taking responsibility for monitoring learning, teaching and the quality of work in their departments. Swift action is taken by the SLT to address any weaknesses identified through evaluation. This includes creating opportunities for mentoring, shadowing and targeted professional learning in order to build staff confidence and skills in order to improve performance.

Since the last validation report of December 2012, the headteacher has successfully led the school through a process of transformational change. As a result, there is a culture of ambition and celebrating achievement. A 'can do' attitude is evident amongst teachers and young people. Examples of innovative, sector-leading practice within the school include the rigorous approaches to work scrutiny; the wide range of workshops for parents and parent forum sessions; the commitment of staff to participating in an advanced teaching skills programme and the approaches to developing a fully inclusive school.

Young people are benefitting from increasing opportunities to contribute meaningfully to school improvement. The Junior Leadership Team is proud of its achievements in helping to negotiate more healthy options in the school canteen. In all departments across the school, young people participate in 'student voice' focus groups to give feedback to their teachers on aspects of learning and teaching. There is further scope for the Junior Leadership Team to focus on improving learning and teaching.



## **Stakeholders' views**

Parents and partners appreciate the open, welcoming and approachable nature of the school. They feel that teachers know their children well and appreciate the efforts that staff make to personalise and tailor the education provision for their children. Parents and young people particularly appreciate the extra revision classes which teachers hold after school, at lunchtimes and on Saturdays. Parents are pleased with most aspects of communication between home and school. They like the newsletters, the 'Show My Homework' website and the system of text-alerts which keep them up to date with their children's learning and important events. Parents find the range of parent workshop sessions very helpful and think that the Parents Forum meetings provide good opportunities to learn about the work of the school, and to contribute their views. There is scope for the school to advertise the purpose and content of these sessions more overtly in order to encourage even more parents to attend. A few parents would like clarification about the processes and timings for their children choosing their course options in Year 9. In response to feedback from parents, the school is in the process of improving the way they report to parents on children's progress, achievements and next steps in learning.

## **Summary**

### **Capacity for improvement**

The school has the capacity to further improve. It has a very impressive track record of improvement from its low baseline when the last validation review was conducted in 2012. This review has shown that the school has strong and effective leadership with a clear mission. The headteacher has developed robust self-evaluation procedures which monitor the quality of teaching and student performance. There are now clear, well-defined systems which are delivering sustainable improvements and effective performance management procedures which hold staff to account. The school is inclusive and strives to meet the learning needs of all students. Teachers are hard-working, effective and committed to students' success. They share good practice and mentor new teachers. The school has an outward looking approach and staff regularly search for good practice. The school benefits from the support of its parents, partners and wider community.

This validation visit found the following key strengths.

- The leadership of the headteacher, senior leadership team and majority of middle leaders.
- The quality of teaching and learning in most subjects.
- Staffs' use of progress and attainment data to focus on and improve the performance in each subject.
- The school's inclusive ethos and the support provided by staff and partners to help students with special educational needs.
- The steps taken by the school to improve the engagement of parents in their children's education.
- The high levels of participation of the motivated students in the school's extensive programme of enrichment activities.

We discussed with staff and the Education Department how they might continue to improve the school. This is what we agreed with them.

- Continue to raise attendance and aspirations for higher attainment across the school.
- Continue to share good practice in order to improve progress and attainment, especially in science.

Here are the evaluations for La Mare de Carteret High School.

<b>Improvements in performance</b>	<b>good</b>
<b>Learners' experiences</b>	<b>very good</b>
<b>Teaching for effective learning</b>	<b>very good</b>
<b>Meeting learning needs</b>	<b>very good</b>
<b>Improvement through self-evaluation</b>	<b>very good</b>
<b>Leadership of improvement and change</b>	<b>very good</b>

### **What happens at the end of the validation?**

We are satisfied with the overall quality of provision. We are confident that the school's self-evaluation processes are leading to improvements. As a result, we will make no further visits in connection with this visit. As part of its arrangements for reporting to parents on the quality of education, the Education Department will inform parents about the school's progress.

Terry Carr  
HM Inspector

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## Appendix 1

<p><b>Excellent</b></p> <p>6</p>	<p><b>Outstanding or sector leading</b></p> <p>An evaluation of excellent applies to provision which is sector leading. Pupils' experiences and achievements are of a very high quality. An evaluation of excellent represents an outstanding standard of provision which exemplifies very best practice and is worth disseminating beyond the school. It implies that very high levels of performance are sustainable and will be maintained.</p>
<p><b>Very good</b></p> <p>5</p>	<p><b>Major strengths</b></p> <p>An evaluation of very good applies to provision characterised by major strengths. There are very few areas for improvement and any that do exist do not significantly diminish pupils' experiences. Whilst an evaluation of very good represents a high standard of provision, it is a standard that should be achievable by all. It implies that it is fully appropriate to continue to make provision without significant adjustment. However, there is an expectation that the school will take opportunities to improve and strive to raise performance to excellent.</p>
<p><b>Good</b></p> <p>4</p>	<p><b>Important strengths with areas for improvement</b></p> <p>An evaluation of good applies to provision characterised by important strengths which, taken together, clearly outweigh any areas for improvement. An evaluation of good represents a standard of provision in which the strengths have a significantly positive impact. However, the quality of pupils' experiences is diminished in some way by aspects in which improvement is required. It implies that the school should seek to improve further the areas of important strength, but take action to address the areas for improvement.</p>
<p><b>Satisfactory</b></p> <p>3</p>	<p><b>Strengths just outweigh weaknesses</b></p> <p>An evaluation of satisfactory applies to provision characterised by strengths which just outweigh weaknesses. An evaluation of satisfactory indicates that pupils have access to a basic level of provision. It represents a standard where the strengths have a positive impact on pupils' experiences. However, while the weaknesses are not important enough to have a substantially adverse impact, they do constrain the overall quality of pupils' experiences. It implies that the school should take action to address areas of weakness by building on its strengths.</p>
<p><b>Weak</b></p> <p>2</p>	<p><b>Important weaknesses</b></p> <p>An evaluation of weak applies to provision which has some strengths, but where there are important weaknesses. In general, an evaluation of weak may be arrived at in a number of circumstances. While there may be some strength, important weaknesses will, either individually or collectively, be sufficient to diminish pupils' experiences in substantial ways. It implies the need for prompt, structured and planned action on the part of the school.</p>
<p><b>Unsatisfactory</b></p> <p>1</p>	<p>An evaluation of unsatisfactory applies when there are major weaknesses in provision requiring immediate remedial action. Pupils' experiences are at risk in significant respects. In almost all cases, staff responsible for provision evaluated as unsatisfactory will require support from senior managers in planning and carrying out the necessary actions to effect improvement. This may involve working alongside other staff or agencies in or beyond the school.</p>