

8 March 2017

Dear Parent/Carer

La Houquette Primary School States of Guernsey

Recently, as you may know, my colleagues and I visited your child's school. During our visit, we talked to parents and children and worked closely with the headteacher and staff. We wanted to find out how well children are learning and achieving and how well the school supports children to do their best. The headteacher shared with us the school's successes and priorities for improvement. We looked at some particular aspects of the school's recent work, including approaches to improving learning and teaching, including in mathematics; and the school's efforts to foster community involvement. As a result, we were able to find out how good the school is at improving children's education.

How well do children learn and achieve?

Across all classes in the school, relationships are very positive between children and their teachers. This is contributing to a happy learning environment where children are eager to learn. Children are keen to share their learning. Most children report that they enjoy their learning and that they get help when they need it. Children are proud of their school and speak positively about the opportunities they have within their lessons and through wider experiences. Staff are very aware of the unique context of their school and island life and ensure that learning experiences provide children with the opportunity to develop skills relevant to their lives. A good example of this is that all children learn to swim both within the school pool and in the sea. A wide variety of clubs and activities bring additional breadth to learning and provide children with opportunities to develop their talents, skills and interests. Children with a particular interest in music benefit from the island-wide Guernsey Music Service. Recognising that not all children have opportunities to take part in instrumental music tuition, other than in the Year 4 Wider Opportunities scheme, there is an enthusiastic school orchestra, choir and ukulele club for any child who wishes to attend.

In their first year in school in Reception classes, children have outstanding learning experiences. They are actively engaged and show great independence and confidence in leading their own learning. Staff skilfully intervene to ensure all young children build on their previous learning through open-ended, challenging activities. In Year 1, teachers are skilled in ensuring that children explain their learning and challenge them to achieve highly. However, as children move through the primary stages, overall they do not yet have a robust understanding of their individual

strengths and next steps as learners. Children in La Houquette Primary are now ready to take on more responsibility to direct and lead their own learning.

Children across all stages have many and varied opportunities to take part in a variety of sports including football, netball and athletics. Participation in island and inter-island competitions is enabling children to compete with others which in turn, improves their skills. Children are benefitting from participation in a range of community events, such as Floral Guernsey, carol singing, liberation celebrations and the West Show. The school is well placed to seek accreditation for some of its work to recognise achievements, for example learning outdoors and children's involvement in conservation in the nature reserve within the school grounds.

Children's progress through Reception classes and by the end of Year 1 is very good. At Key Stage 1 (KS1), by the end of Year 2, children achieve above the Bailiwick average in reading, writing and mathematics. Most achieve above the Bailiwick average L2B+ in reading and writing with almost all achieving L2B+ in mathematics. Expected progress across KS1 is in line with the Bailiwick average for reading and mathematics and below for writing. Data shows overall that by the end of Key Stage 2 (KS2) at Year 6, children attain L4B+ in line with the Bailiwick average for reading and above the Bailiwick average for writing and mathematics. However, there is much headroom for improvement. Many children are capable of reaching higher standards given the knowledge, skills and talents that they bring to school. The headteacher recognises this and is taking action to ensure more children can make 10+ points progress and achieve L3+ in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Key Stage 1 (KS1) than the Bailiwick average. By the end of KS2, the numbers of children making 12 points expected progress is in line with the Bailiwick average for reading and mathematics, and above the Bailiwick average for writing. However, the school needs to continue, as planned, to ensure more children attain higher standards. Building on the very good start children make in Reception and Year 1, staff should work to ensure children make consistently very good progress as they move through the stages of the school.

How well does the school support children to develop and learn?

Across the school, children benefit from positive learning environments where they feel valued and happy. The school's focus on developing learning approaches in areas such as growth mindset, mindfulness and emotional wellbeing are contributing to a culture where children know it is good to 'have a go' with their learning. Across the school, children have regular opportunities to work together in pairs and small groups. Overall, children interact well with each other and, as a result, children are becoming more confident in talking about their learning. In the best lessons, children have a clear understanding about what they are learning. However, the purpose of the lesson is not always made clear enough for children to understand the knowledge and skills they are developing and what steps they need to take to be successful. While feedback is being provided to children across all stages, this does not always help children know how to improve. As rightly identified by the school, staff would benefit from continuing to share good practice and in agreeing expectations for how children should receive feedback on their learning. In most lessons, teachers are making good use of questioning to check children's understanding. Children are encouraged to answer questions posed by teachers and in the majority of classes, are encouraged to

ask questions themselves. There is scope to build on the work already started in developing approaches to effective questioning to ensure that teacher questioning encourages children to engage in more creative and critical thinking. Staff should continue as planned to ensure children continue to have a range of opportunities to explain and justify their thinking. Overall, across Year 2 to Year 6, children could achieve more during lessons. In the best lessons, teachers use skilful interactions to provide appropriate support and challenge for individual learners and small groups. Overall, teachers need to be more responsive in their planning and to intervene and adapt their lessons in the moment to ensure all children are making the best possible progress in their learning.

Staff across the school demonstrate care and consideration for children. The school has well considered and effective approaches to identifying children's learning and wellbeing needs. Systems are organised efficiently by the experienced and very effective Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO). She maintains a helpful overview of all children who have additional needs and the range and types of support they are receiving. The school works in close partnership with a range of services and agencies to identify and support individual children. Professionals from these agencies provide valuable one-to-one support for children. They also provide valuable advice and guidance to teachers. Helpful individual plans are in place for children who require additional support. Within these plans, staff plan long-term goals for children as well as specific and clear shorter-term targets. These support plans are written in child-friendly language and are supporting individual children's progress. Class teachers, support staff and parents are involved in the creation and review of these plans. Commendably, children themselves have a voice in reviewing how well they are doing and in identifying strategies that help them. Learning support assistants (LSAs) provide valuable support to children to help them in their learning and development. LSAs work closely with teachers in lessons. They lead small groups of children out of class to provide extra support, for example for aspects of literacy and numeracy.

The school has appropriate policies and procedures in place to keep children safe at school. Clear policies for promoting positive behaviour and for dealing with any instances of bullying are in place. As part of assemblies, and through the personal and social health education programme, the school explores the topic of cyber-bullying. This is ensuring that there is a clear understanding about what cyber-bullying is, how it can be prevented and how it should be dealt with if it occurs. Across the school, staff make good use of the environments available to them to provide a varied experience for children. Teachers provide children with a broad and varied range of activities, resources and experiences which overall meet the needs of most children. In the best lessons, particularly at Reception and in Year 1, staff skilfully support, challenge and extend children's learning where appropriate. In these lessons, inspectors observed staff adapt children's learning very well to help meet their varying needs. In order to further meet children's needs, staff across the primary stages need to ensure that the tasks and activities they plan are better matched to the needs of the class. Too many activities and experiences observed by HM Inspectors in lessons did not demand much of children. Other tasks were too difficult for some. Better planned lessons will help meet all children's learning needs more effectively and lead to improved outcomes in children's attainment.

Children at all stages benefit from a broad and balanced curriculum. The headteacher has led a successful process of staff and stakeholder involvement and consultation to create a shared vision, values and aims for the school. Led by the deputy headteacher, staff are working to evolve the curriculum to provide more creative, relevant and active learning experiences for children. The headteacher and mathematics leader have identified the need for staff to take a closer look at how effectively mathematics is taught across the primary stages. Inspectors agree that this is an area of practice that requires improvement. Staff should continue with their plans to review and refresh the 'calculations' policy in order to ensure effective learning and teaching in mathematics takes place in all classes.

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

The headteacher's robust self-evaluation processes are providing a clear and accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. He places a high priority on improving experiences and outcomes for children through striving for high quality learning and teaching across the school. He involves children, parents, staff and the wider community in setting out the vision for the school. His rigorous analysis of data and observations of lessons has highlighted the need to improve the quality of learning in specific areas such as mathematics. The headteacher has introduced a range of processes to gather the views of children, parents and staff including questionnaires, professional dialogue and an 'open door' policy. The views of the school community are gathered and used very well to bring about improvements and parents feel much more involved with the school. Parent forum meetings are a very good example of stakeholder engagement where parents are invited to discuss a range of school-related issues. Pupil voice is becoming a stronger feature of the school's approach to improvement. Commendably, the pupil-led inspection in Spring 2016 involved a group of children providing their own astute evaluation of the school's provision. There is now scope to build on this innovative work and for children to have greater opportunities on an on-going basis to contribute to decision making and improving the work of the school.

There is clear evidence that the headteacher is making a difference. Since his appointment in September 2015, he has led a process of improvement and change at La Houquette Primary School very effectively. Despite a number of staffing changes and challenges during his time in post, he demonstrates an energetic, dynamic, empowering and highly successful style of leadership. He is knowledgeable, resilient and focused on securing improved outcomes for all children. He is ably supported by the deputy headteacher who carries out her remit well. She is well organised and highly committed to the children and school. Her teaching is a model of good practice, she is a reflective practitioner and has a clear understanding of children's needs. The headteacher promotes the development of leadership and accountability at all levels across the school. As planned, the school should continue to develop the leadership roles of the wider leadership team, in order for them to be more involved in leading improvements across the school.

Parents are very positive about almost all aspects of the work of the school. They appreciate the school's efforts to keep them up to date with important information. For example, they feel that newsletters, the text-alert system and regular use of social media are used well to communicate the life and work of the school. Parents agree

that teachers are approachable and that staff know their children well. We have asked the school to develop consistent ways for teachers to share with families information about what children are learning in class. Some groups of parents felt very well informed about how well their children were progressing. However other groups of parents would appreciate more regular information in order that they can best support their children's learning at home. Parents themselves add great value to the school community in important ways. This includes providing practical help in classes and on school trips. The Parent Teacher Association supports the school very well, for example in helping to raise significant funds and in encouraging children to participate in community life. The headteacher has established very productive working relationships across and beyond the school community. There is clear evidence that his success in improving community partnerships, such as with Floral Guernsey, are having a positive impact on the development of children's citizenship skills, sense of belonging and in learning about their local community. As planned, the school should continue to develop the leadership skills of children, both in directing their own learning in class and across the wider life of the school.

This validation visit found the following key strengths.

- The dynamic leadership of the headteacher in driving forward improvements and in ensuring that the school is at the heart of the local community.
- Respectful and confident children who are articulate and keen to contribute to their school.
- The outstanding experiences for the youngest children.
- Approaches to engaging parents and partners in the life of the school which lead to enriching experiences for children.
- Approaches to seeking the views of the school community to help inform change.

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

- Continue with plans to share and improve practice in learning, teaching and assessment amongst the staff team. Focus on improving the depth of learning and timely interventions to ensure challenge within lessons for all children.
- Continue to develop leadership at all levels in order that all children make the best possible progress.
- Develop more focused improvement action points to ensure they have maximum impact on the work of the school.

Here are the evaluations for La Houquette Primary School.

Improvements in performance	satisfactory
Learners' experiences	good
Teaching for effective learning	satisfactory
Meeting learning needs	good
Improvement through self-evaluation	good
Leadership of improvement and change	good

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, Education Services will inform parents about the school's progress.

Lesley A Johnstone
HM Inspector

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Appendix 1

<p>Excellent</p> <p>6</p>	<p>Outstanding or sector leading</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>Very good</p> <p>5</p>	<p>Major strengths</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>Good</p> <p>4</p>	<p>Important strengths with areas for improvement</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>Satisfactory</p> <p>3</p>	<p>Strengths just outweigh weaknesses</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>Weak</p> <p>2</p>	<p>Important weaknesses</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>Unsatisfactory</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>

Validation report: La Houquette Primary School

Validation dates: 7 – 10 February 2017

Managing Inspector: Lesley Johnstone

Type of school: Primary

Age range of learners: 4-11

Gender of learners: Mixed

Number on roll: 274

Introduction

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

The context of the school

La Houquette Primary School was built in the mid-seventies and has a two form entry. It is situated in the rural west of the island and serves a wide area covering the parishes of St Pierre du Bois, St Saviour's and Torteval. At the time of the validation visit the school roll was 274. The current headteacher has been in post since September 2015.

How well do children learn and achieve?

Learners' experiences

Across all classes, relationships are very positive between children and their teachers. Children are keen to learn and to share their learning with adults and with each other. In most lessons, they are enthusiastic and motivated by the activities teachers plan for them. Children are proud of their school and speak positively about the opportunities they have within their lessons and through wider experiences. For example, children in Year 3 spoke enthusiastically about their topic on pirates and how they shared their learning with their parents at their assembly. In their first year in school in Reception classes, young children have outstanding learning experiences. They are actively engaged and show great independence and confidence in leading their own learning. Staff skilfully intervene in learning to ensure children build on their previous learning through open-ended, challenging activities. Across the school at the primary stages, while most children are engaged in their lessons, they could participate more actively and take greater responsibility for their own learning. The majority of children feel that staff talk regularly with them about how to improve their learning. However, children do not yet have a robust understanding of their individual strengths and next steps as learners. Most children are not yet able to accurately discuss their progress. This is an area where we feel children could be given more responsibility through, for example, creating personal targets and evaluating their own progress towards these.

A particular strength of the school is the variety of wider opportunities planned and provided by school staff, partners and the Parent Teacher Association which enrich children's learning. For example, the strong focus on children planting and growing their own vegetables is helping them to develop a better understanding of where their food comes from. The headteacher recognises the central importance of the school in the community and has worked very hard since his appointment to foster and develop very positive community links. All community partners who engaged with the inspection team were very positive about the increasing role of the school in the community and the enthusiasm, commitment and drive of the headteacher.

The school places high importance on the development of outdoor learning. Children in Years 4, 5 and 6 benefit from residential trips to Lihou, France and London. Children in the Reception classes participate in a weekly 'Wednesday Welly Walk' where they take their learning in literacy, numeracy and other curricular areas outside into the school grounds. This provides a very motivating and engaging context for children to progress in their learning. All staff have completed training in the 'forest schools' initiative and are now making effective use of the nature reserve which is located within the school grounds. Children in Year 1 worked together to develop their own outdoor learning spaces with support from local businesses. This provided an engaging real-life context for researching and communicating with local businesses. Staff are very aware of the unique context of their school and island life and ensure that their experiences provide children with the opportunity to develop skills relevant to their lives. A good example of this is that all children learn to swim both within the school pool and in the sea.

A wide variety of out-of-class activities bring additional breadth to learning and provide children with opportunities to develop their talents, skills and interests. For example,

children participate in the gardening club, Guernsey French, indoor games, lace and art club. Children with a particular interest in music benefit from the island-wide Guernsey Music Service. Recognising that not all children have opportunities to take part in instrumental music tuition, other than through the Year 4 Wider Opportunities scheme, there is an enthusiastic school orchestra, choir and ukulele club for any child who wishes to join. Children are beginning to develop the skills of active citizenship through planned opportunities to undertake whole school responsibilities, for example, as house captains/vice captains and lunch monitors. Through these opportunities, children are beginning to develop leadership skills. There is scope to provide a wider range of opportunities for children to develop leadership skills at all levels across the school. In doing this, children would benefit from identifying the skills they are improving as a result of these roles and how they can apply these in a range of contexts.

Improvements in performance

Children, staff, parents and the local community are very proud of the school. Children across all stages have many and varied opportunities to take part in a variety of sports including football, netball and athletics. Participation in island and inter-island competitions is enabling children to compete with others which in turn, improves their skills. Children are benefitting from participation in a range of community events, such as Floral Guernsey, carol singing, Liberation Day celebrations and the West Show. This, alongside school-wide opportunities such as class assemblies, musical productions and concerts in the redeveloped gun pit, gives them opportunities to develop their skills and confidence in performing to a range of audiences. Children's achievements are celebrated at assemblies and via social media, the school web page, newsletters, the local media and through the Reception class learning profiles. Children develop an understanding of their responsibilities through fundraising events for local charities such as the Swimathon. The school plans to develop further children's understanding of the skills and attributes acquired through increased participation in the events, celebrations and community partnerships. The school is well placed to seek accreditation for some of their work to recognise achievements, such as the John Muir Award. The appropriate focus on developing children as successful learners features across the school and most children respond very well to the challenge.

The headteacher has led the school in the improvement of both the quality of learning and the accuracy of information showing children's progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Children now make better progress as they build on the very effective learning in the Reception and Year 1 classes. He has worked with parents and partners to tackle issues in the attendance patterns for some children.

Children's progress through Reception classes and by the end of Year 1 is very good. At Key Stage 1 (KS1), by the end of Year 2, children achieve above the Bailiwick average in reading, writing and mathematics. Most achieve above the Bailiwick average L2B+ in reading and writing with almost all achieving L2B+ in mathematics. Expected progress across KS1 is in line with the Bailiwick average for reading and mathematics and below for writing. Data shows overall that by the end of Key Stage 2 (KS2) at Year 6, children attain L4B+ in line with the Bailiwick average for reading and above the Bailiwick average for writing and mathematics. However, there is much

headroom for improvement. Many children are capable of reaching higher standards given the knowledge, skills and talents that they bring to school. The headteacher recognises this and is taking action to ensure more children can make 10+ points progress and achieve L3+ in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Key Stage 1 (KS1) than the Bailiwick average. By the end of KS2, the numbers of children making 12 points expected progress is in line with the Bailiwick average for reading and mathematics, and above the Bailiwick average for writing. However, the school needs to continue, as planned, to ensure more children attain higher standards. Building on the very good start children make in Reception and Year 1, staff should work to ensure children make consistently very good progress as they move through the stages of the school.

The school improvement plan highlights priorities that will impact positively on outcomes for children. The whole school focus on mathematics is improving the quality of teaching, learning and understanding of standards and expectations of children at each level. There is a need to continue to work towards ensuring that high quality learning is consistent across the school and in all aspects of children's learning. While the current priorities for improvement are all very relevant, the school should consider how the improvement plan could be streamlined with a more manageable number of key priorities.

How well does the school support children to develop and learn?

Teaching for effective learning

The headteacher has a very clear focus on the importance of improving learning and teaching. He has committed to providing opportunities for a number of teachers to undertake professional learning, such as the 'Outstanding Teacher Intervention' programme and to attend seminars by well-respected international educationalists. Involvement in this professional learning is beginning to improve practice across the school. At this time, however, the quality of learning and teaching across the school is too variable. Staff should now revisit the work which has begun to identify what makes a high-quality learning experience. In doing this, they should build on the most effective practice within the school and beyond, to ensure there is more consistently high quality learning for all children.

Across the school, teachers plan learning collaboratively to build on children's interests and are beginning to provide opportunities for children to have real contexts to develop their learning. At most stages across the school, cooperative teaching is helping teachers build on their own skills. Children in their first years in school benefit from stimulating learning environments and outdoor learning spaces which enable them to explore and investigate. Well-timed, skilful interactions by these staff support and extend children's learning effectively. As a result of these very strong learning experiences, children in the early stages are making strong progress in their learning. Staff and children in the first years of school use digital technologies very effectively to enhance learning. This model of good practice should now be built upon to ensure that as they progress in their learning, children are more independently using a wide range of effective digital technologies through the course of their learning. The implementation of the new technology system will support teachers in this work.

Across the school, children have regular opportunities to work together in pairs and small groups. Overall, children interact well with each other and, as a result, children are becoming more confident talking about their learning. Staff should continue, as planned, to develop further this work to ensure children continue to have a range of opportunities to explain and justify their thinking. In the best lessons, children have a clear understanding about what they are learning. However, the purpose of the lesson is not always made clear enough for children to understand the knowledge and/or skills they are developing in the lesson and what steps they need to take to be successful. Staff would benefit from revisiting current practice and refining their approaches to setting learning intentions and success criteria to ensure these help children evaluate their own learning. Consideration could also be given to involving children directly in the creation of success criteria at the start of lessons. The school has rightly identified that the quality of feedback to children on their learning varies across the school. While verbal and written feedback is being provided to children across all stages, this does not always help children know how to improve. Staff would benefit from identifying the key features of effective feedback and agreeing consistency in expectations. In most lessons, teachers are making good use of questioning to check children's understanding. Children are encouraged to answer questions posed by teachers and in the majority of classes, are encouraged to ask questions themselves. There is scope to build on the work already started in developing approaches to effective questioning to ensure that teacher questioning encourages children to engage in more creative and critical thinking. Overall, across Year 2 to Year 6, children could achieve more during lessons. Teachers need to be more responsive in their planning and to intervene and adapt their lessons in the moment to ensure all children are making the best possible progress in their learning. For example, enabling children who are confident in a concept to begin work on a task independently while the teacher provides more structured support for those who require it. This will help ensure teachers capitalise on all opportunities to develop thinking and extend learning. In the best lessons, teachers use skilful interactions to provide appropriate support and challenge for individual learners and small groups. Teachers are now making better use of a range of resources, especially in numeracy work, to enable children to use concrete materials to support learning.

Meeting learning needs

Overall, staff across the school demonstrate care and consideration for children. The school has well considered and effective approaches to identifying children's learning and wellbeing needs. A clear, staged approach to intervention is understood by all staff. Arrangements and processes are organised efficiently by the experienced and very effective Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO). She maintains a helpful overview of all children who have additional support needs and the range and types of support they are receiving. The school works in close partnership with a range of services and agencies to identify and support children's needs. Professionals from these agencies provide valuable one-to-one support for children. They also provide advice and guidance to teachers. As a result, the school is building the capacity of the staff team to meet the range of needs that children have. The school has effective systems in place to support children who are having difficulty with certain aspects of their learning, for example through a range of targeted support groups for literacy and numeracy. Children requiring emotional support are quickly identified and very well assisted to meet their needs at difficult times in their learning.

Learning support assistants (LSAs) provide valuable support to children to help them in their learning and development. LSAs work closely with teachers in lessons. They lead small groups of children out of class to provide extra support, for example for aspects of literacy and numeracy. The SENCO liaises with teachers on an ongoing basis to review the deployment of LSA expertise in order to provide support for children when they need it. Various staff from different services, including occupational therapy, educational psychologist, the Dyslexia Day Centre, communication and autism, social, emotional and behavioural support are helping to make a difference to children's learning. In line with the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice (Guernsey 2004), helpful pupil profiles and individual plans are in place for children who require additional support. Within these plans, staff plan long-term goals for children as well as specific and clear shorter-term targets. These support plans are written in child-friendly language and are supporting individual children's progress. Class teachers, support staff and parents are involved in the creation and review of these plans. Commendably, children themselves have a voice in reviewing how well they are doing and in identifying strategies that help them. Staff use this collective information well when planning to meet children's individual needs. Where appropriate, vulnerable children have individual plans which are kept up to date based on monitoring and evaluation of their progress.

The school implements effectively the States of Guernsey policy and procedures for safeguarding and child protection (CP). The headteacher is the school's CP Co-ordinator. The school ensures that all staff receive training in child protection. A useful policy for staff has been developed by the headteacher which explains the process for staff reporting a concern about a child and how the range of services link together once such a referral has been made. In the pre-inspection questionnaires, all staff agreed that they were aware of the procedures on how to keep children safe. The headteacher is leading staff very well in promoting health and wellbeing as the responsibility of all. Along with the wider senior leadership team, he knows each child in the school as an individual. As a result, staff are alert to the social and emotional needs of children and any potential barriers to their learning. The wellbeing of children is discussed informally on a day-to-day basis by key staff, and also more formally during professional meetings between teachers, support staff, the SENCO and school leaders. Any concerns about children are appropriately recorded by staff.

The school has appropriate policies and procedures in place to keep children safe at school. For example, risk assessments are carried out for activities such as ice-skating and sea-swimming. Clear policies for promoting positive behaviour and for dealing with any instances of bullying are in place. As part of assemblies, and through the personal and social health education programme, the school explores the topic of cyber-bullying. This is helping to achieve a clear understanding between children, staff and parents about what cyber-bullying is, how it can be prevented and how it should be dealt with if it occurs.

Across the school, staff make good use of the environments available to them to provide a varied experience for children. Teachers provide children with a broad and varied range of activities, resources and experiences which, overall meet the needs of most children. Increasingly, children are benefiting from meaningful and motivating opportunities to learn outdoors. Overall, staff are responsive and sensitive in how they meet the varying individual needs of children. In the best lessons, particularly at

Reception and in Year 1, staff skilfully support, challenge and extend children's learning where appropriate. In these lessons, inspectors observed staff differentiate children's learning very well to help meet their varying needs. In order to further meet children's needs, staff across the primary stages need to ensure that the tasks and activities they plan are better matched to the needs of all learners within the class. Too many activities and experiences observed by HM Inspectors in lessons did not demand much of children. Other tasks were too difficult for some. Better planned lessons will help meet all children's learning needs more effectively and lead to improved outcomes in children's attainment.

Curriculum

Children at all stages benefit from a broad and balanced curriculum. The headteacher has led a successful process of staff and stakeholder involvement and consultation to create a shared vision, values and aims for the school. Led by the headteacher and the deputy headteacher, staff are working to evolve the curriculum to provide more creative, relevant and active learning experiences for children. Importantly, there is clear evidence that staff and children are making the most of the unique setting of the school and superb school grounds as a focus for learning. Staff are increasingly responsive to children's interests and incorporate their views in planning for learning. Overall, the curriculum across the school is tailored well to meet the needs and interests of children. Children's engagement in the island-wide 'Project 200' is allowing them to personalise and take total responsibility for their own learning. Children really appreciate the visitors that come in to school, as well as visits and trips to places of interest. These experiences help to enrich their learning and add value to the curriculum. There are increasing opportunities for children to learn outdoors within their school grounds, at the nature reserve and further afield. The local area provides a rich and unique context for learning.

The school has programmes in place for all curricular areas. The staff team have spent time recently refreshing many of these programmes and topics to ensure the children experience a relevant and motivating skills-based curriculum. The headteacher has identified the need for staff to take a closer look at how effectively mathematics is taught across the primary stages. Inspectors agree that this is an area of practice that requires improvement. As such, staff should continue with their plans to review and refresh the 'calculations' policy in order to ensure effective learning and teaching in mathematics takes place in all classes.

Staff in Reception classes have established very effective arrangements to help young children make a smooth start to school. This includes visiting children at home prior to starting Reception. Arrangements for children as they transfer to secondary school are well embedded and have been developed over recent years to ensure more effective sharing of information about prior learning and the needs of learners. Staff work well with local secondary schools to provide appropriate support for all children as they move to the next stage. Through the Transition Plus programme, children with special educational needs receive appropriate additional support from secondary school staff prior to starting in Year 7.

The school are developing an appropriate plan to implement and embed the new 'Big Curriculum' model for the Bailiwick. Through their recent work on developing a

creative curriculum, along with work on implementing approaches such as Growth Mindset, staff feel they are well placed to undertake this new phase of curriculum design. There are well-considered plans in place to review how subject leaders undertake their responsibilities in order to utilise their skills and experience in a more flexible, responsive and collaborative way within 'curriculum teams'.

The school has, in recent years, made valuable connections with a range of partners who help to enrich the curriculum for children. This is a key strength of the school. The contribution of partners and volunteers to school projects is well planned and adds to the community spirit of the school and local area. For example, the work of Floral Guernsey to develop the school grounds as a place of historical and local interest is of great benefit to the school and local community.

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

Improvement through self-evaluation

The headteacher's robust self-evaluation processes provide a clear and accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. There is a high priority placed on improving experiences and outcomes for children through focused improvements on learning and teaching. In a relatively short period of time, the self-evaluation processes he has introduced have had clear impact on children's experiences. He involves children, parents, staff and the wider community in setting out the vision for the school. His rigorous triangulation of data and learning has highlighted the need to improve the quality of learning in specific areas such as mathematics. Working closely with Education Services who provided external scrutiny, the mathematics subject leader used the mathematics audit as a benchmark to improve attainment and the quality of learning for children. Through monitoring of classroom practice and provision of focused professional learning opportunities for staff, there are clear improvements in the way that staff are reflecting on their practice. As planned the school should continue to build on these positive changes. The school should continue with plans to develop and extend leadership roles in order that they contribute to the wider leadership of the school in securing continuous improvement.

The headteacher has introduced a range of processes to gather the views of children, parents and staff including using questionnaires, creating an ethos of professional dialogue and ensuring an 'open door' policy. Views are gathered and used very well to bring about improvements and parents feel much more involved with the school. The parent forum is a very good example of stakeholder engagement where parents are invited to discuss a range of school-related issues. Meetings are led by both school staff and committee members. Pupil voice is becoming a feature of the school's approach to improvement. Increasingly, more opportunities are being introduced for children to influence the work and life of the school through meaningful contexts related to teaching and learning. Commendably, the pupil-led inspection in Spring 2016 involved a group of children providing a comprehensive evaluation of the school's provision. The school facilitated the inspection by children, supported by an external facilitator. These children created their own criteria for observing lessons and created a report which gave a clear view of the school from the perspective of the children. There is now scope for the school to build on this sector-leading work and for

more children to have greater opportunities to contribute to decision making and improving the work of the school.

Staff across the school are increasingly using self-evaluation approaches more rigorously to support their evaluations of the school's work. Staff participate in working groups to take forward whole school priorities. These groups are developing in their effectiveness. Throughout the school year there is clear leadership and direction from the headteacher based on the evidence gathered through evaluative activity. He provides robust feedback to staff on key strengths and areas of further improvement on their classroom practice. Moderation meetings are well planned and are making a positive difference to ensuring the consistency of teachers' judgements. Staff, supported by the headteacher, are increasingly providing accurate information and analysis about children's progress.

There is clear evidence that the continued focus on improvements to learning and teaching is impacting positively on children's learning. There is a need to continue to improve the quality of dialogue between teachers to ensure there is greater continuity in learning. The staff team should continue to share good practice and look outward for comparator information to inform and challenge their practice.

Leadership of improvement and change

Since his appointment in September 2015, the headteacher has led a process of improvement and change at La Houquette Primary School very effectively. Despite a number of staffing changes and challenges during his time in post, he demonstrates an energetic, dynamic, empowering and highly successful style of leadership. He is knowledgeable, resilient and very focused on securing improved outcomes for all children. He has led a very successful process of consultation and engagement with the whole school community in order to create a shared and appropriately ambitious vision for La Houquette.

There is clear evidence of the impact of the headteacher's leadership of change. For example, in creating a welcoming and nurturing whole school ethos where children, parents and staff feel valued; in developing links with partners and the community which enrich children's experiences; and in striving for consistently high standards in learning and teaching across the school. The deputy headteacher works closely with the headteacher. She is organised, astute, highly committed to the children and school and carries out her remit well. This includes leading the development of the curriculum. Her teaching is a model of good practice. She is a reflective practitioner and has a clear understanding of children's needs.

The headteacher appropriately promotes the development of leadership and accountability at all levels across the school. As planned, the school should continue to develop the leadership roles of Key Stage leaders and subject leaders in order for them to be more involved in leading improvements across the school. For example the role of senior leaders should be developed in order that they take a lead role across year groups and provide leadership and direction for teachers and support staff. They should take on responsibility for analysing data and providing feedback to the wider school leadership team about progress within each year group and across the Key Stage. The school has creative plans in place to develop the role of subject

leaders in order to ensure that important curriculum developments can be implemented through a collaborative and cohesive approach.

The headteacher has made clear progress in establishing and leading a culture of self-evaluation which is leading to improvement. As a result, staff are engaging more frequently in professional dialogue and contributing to conversations about what excellent learning and teaching looks like. Staff should continue to have these discussions in order to share more widely the effective practice that exists within the school. Across the school, many leaders and staff engage in high quality professional learning and training in order to develop their practice. Staff should continue to develop and embed an outward-looking approach to improving their practice. School leaders facilitate opportunities for staff to meet together in their stage groups to plan learning and teaching. Staff receive feedback from school leaders following lesson observations. This feedback identifies the strengths and areas for further development in their teaching. In line with the expectations of Education Services, all staff participate in an appropriate performance management process that highlights where they would benefit from professional learning opportunities which will support and challenge their practice.

The headteacher has established very productive working relationships across and beyond the school community. There is clear evidence that his success in improving community partnerships, such as with Floral Guernsey, are having a positive impact on the development of children's citizenship skills, sense of belonging and in learning about their local community. As planned, the school should continue to develop the leadership skills of children, both in directing their own learning in class and across the wider life of the school.

Stakeholders' views

Parents are very positive about almost all aspects of the work of the school. In the Education Scotland questionnaire survey issued prior to the validation visit, all parents agreed that they were happy with the school and that their children enjoy learning. Parents appreciate the school's efforts to keep them up to date with important information. For example, they feel that newsletters, the text-alert system and regular use of social media are used well to communicate the life and work of the school. Parents appreciate curriculum evenings organised by staff, such as the Growth Mindset and emotional intelligence events. In addition, the open 'parent forum' meetings provide parents with very good opportunities to hear about specific areas of school life and to offer their views. Parents agree that teachers are approachable and that staff know their children well. We have asked the school to develop consistent ways for teachers to share with families information about what children are learning in class. Some groups of parents felt very well informed about how well their children were progressing. Other groups of parents would appreciate more regular information in order that they can best support their children's learning at home. Parents themselves add great value to the school community in important ways, including providing practical help in classes and on school trips. The Parent Teacher Association supports the school very well and helps to raise significant funds. Almost all children told HM Inspectors that their school experiences are helping them to become more confident. Most children say they feel safe and cared for in school. Most feel that they get help when they need it and that staff encourage them to do

well. Around one third of children would like more say in helping to improve their own learning and the work of the school.

Summary

Capacity for improvement

We are confident that, under the leadership of the experienced and highly effective headteacher, the school has the capacity to continue to improve. The headteacher has an accurate view of the school's strengths and priorities for improvement. HM Inspectors were able to validate most of the school's own judgements as part of the validation visit. The wider school leadership team demonstrates a growing capacity to work together to continue to improve standards.

This validation visit found the following key strengths.

- The dynamic leadership of the headteacher in driving forward improvements and in ensuring that the school is at the heart of the local community.
- Respectful and confident children who are articulate and keen to contribute to their school.
- The outstanding experiences for the youngest children.
- Approaches to engaging parents and partners in the life of the school which lead to enriching experiences for children.
- Approaches to seeking the views of the school community to help inform change.

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

- Continue with plans to share and improve practice in learning, teaching and assessment amongst the staff team. Focus on improving the depth of learning and timely interventions to ensure challenge within lessons for all children.
- Continue to develop leadership at all levels in order that all children make the best possible progress.
- Develop more focused improvement action points to ensure they have maximum impact on the work of the school.

Here are the evaluations for La Houquette Primary School.

Improvements in performance	satisfactory
Learners' experiences	good
Teaching for effective learning	satisfactory
Meeting learning needs	good
Improvement through self-evaluation	good
Leadership of improvement and change	good

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 validation. As part of its arrangements for reporting to parents on the quality of education, Education Services will inform parents about the school's progress.

Lesley A Johnstone
HM Inspector

If you would like to receive this letter in a different format, for example, in a translation please contact the administration team on the telephone number which appears at the bottom of the first page of this report.

If you want to give us feedback or make a complaint about our work, please contact us by telephone on 0131 244 4330, or e-mail: complaints@educationscotland.gsi.gov.uk or write to us addressing your letter to the Complaints Manager, Denholm House, Almondvale Business Park, Livingston EH54 6GA.

Appendix 1

<p>Excellent</p> <p>6</p>	<p>Outstanding or sector leading</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>Very good</p> <p>5</p>	<p>Major strengths</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>Good</p> <p>4</p>	<p>Important strengths with areas for improvement</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>Satisfactory</p> <p>3</p>	<p>Strengths just outweigh weaknesses</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>Weak</p> <p>2</p>	<p>Important weaknesses</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>Unsatisfactory</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>