

Headteacher's report to Parents and Carers

Autumn Term 2020

St John's School,

Jersey



Headteacher's Report 2019

Dear Parents,

Those who are new to our school – Thinking, Learning and Caring are our core values. They are the values ... the cornerstones... that hold us together and support us throughout the good and the challenging times in school.

As a school we aim to provide both challenge and support. We want our children to thrive as lifelong learners and as positive people.

Our school is founded upon an understanding of respect and care. Children at St John's learn how to build strong relationships and learn to live well together. They learn to behave with dignity and to respect people of all diversity.

We want the pupils at St John's School to experience joy in their learning, in their relationships and in knowing themselves.

We want your children to enjoy a balanced curriculum that embraces excellence and sets their school experience in a wide framework.

Last year proved to be a very challenging year for us as a staff, for the children and for you as parents. However, it began very well.

At St John's School, children experience high quality teaching and a variety of approaches, as we relentlessly strive for excellence through the development of exciting initiatives and strategies. We do provide opportunities for our children to participate and enjoy a rich programme of artistic, musical, and sporting experiences. Last year we engaged in our historical focus – exploring Elizabeth Castle - the whole school topic - where investigative understanding of local history and questioning skills were the focus of our learning displays around the school. Through these, we celebrated the progression of historical skills from Nursery to Year 6.

Under the guidance of Miss Walker, who leads our Eco Team and the very hardworking and proactive Gardening Club, incorporating the talents of Mr. McBrearty, our sensory garden and amazing gazebo was developed. It has been a symbol of hope for us in recent months. Thank you everyone who has been involved with this.

September 2019 – March 2020

Children demonstrated a range of skills in our hard-working football and netball teams, with both teams proving to be highly successful last year winning their league and doing well in competitions. We had cross country runners, weekly school orchestra practise, choir, chess, sewing bee club, – who made the incredible cushions in our main reception area - art club, engineering club, as well as trips and visits. Our children have such a breadth of learning opportunities. We continue to work towards achieving our silver accreditation with Rights Respecting Schools. We celebrate the breadth of creative arts – drama, music, dance, acting, all offered at St John's School.

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December 17th, 2019, life did change dramatically for us all at school with the Police investigation of a member of staff. This was a very difficult time for our entire community; however, the support from everyone was incredible. I received over 90 emails from parents – both when the investigation was announced and a further 90+, during the court process. Many people were quick to state that the choices of one person did not reflect our community. As staff, and I know, many parents and children too, experienced bewilderment, anger, betrayal, shock, and sadness. It is because of the strength of our community, that we shouldered the pain of this time and relentlessly ploughed forward, continuing with all we do so well. As a staff team, there was huge support for each other and time to work through our thoughts and feelings. We ended the academic year in July, with a huge amount of positive recognition for our pupils and staff. This was planned deliberately, so that the school, like the phoenix, could soar as the strong community we are and we shared that positivity, publicly.

Following on from this was COVID-19. Again, we were pushed to the limit in developing our understanding of online learning. We had no idea how long we would have to engage with this, what activities translated well to the google classroom platform, how much pupil work we needed to upload, as some parents asked for more: some less. But we again showed resilience, perseverance, working outside our comfort zones, to do the best we could in totally unprecedented circumstances. Again, the staff went above and beyond ... particularly with Mr Le Rossignol upskilling staff in developing online learning. Through this, the developing Gazebo remained a beacon of hope.

September 2020, KS2 further developed interactive science – one of our key foci and on track subjects this year, alongside PSHE, – at the Scout Hut. KS1 and FS are focusing on these skills in and around our school. We have begun the year as we mean to go on – working as a team - thinking and learning creatively and developing our broad and balanced curriculum.

I am grateful to the PTA, who work so hard to support the children, come up with amazing ideas to raise funds to provide so much for our pupils. We aim to be a unique and individual school, seeking to serve our community with enthusiasm and commitment and I believe we are totally successful in this aim. We have appreciated parental support in setting up extra-curricular opportunities for pupils: for example, Susie and Emma developing the Sewing Bee Club and achieving great success in the Jersey Eisteddfod. Normally, we have 15 extra – curricular clubs and after school provision opportunities. Thank-you: the more support we have from our community, the greater the breadth of experience for our pupils.

Although teaching and learning was challenging last year, our end of year school data for July 2020, collating an average from all classes, evidenced that

at least 70% + of all pupils were achieving secure or above and no children were evidenced working below ARE. This is a huge achievement for any school, especially with the disruption we experienced and provided evidence that our systems and procedures, as well as the broad curriculum we deliver at St John's School, is robust and rigorous. We anticipate that we will undergo a school review this year and as a staff, we will ensure that St John's School's procedures are tight and rigorous.

I remain a Senior Advisor for Schools and over time, will return to two days a week. This involves supporting specific schools in their development and I also lead the development of Island Moderation in all primary schools in Jersey, both states and private schools and help lead a Curriculum Team for CYPES – ensuring consistency of teaching across our primary schools. I visit schools and I see wonderful things happening, but I also reflect on what we are doing here and know that what we achieve is really good.

Mrs Fairhead is seconded as the Island's lead maths teacher, working with the Maths Advisor, supporting schools in their development of investigative and rigorous mathematics. As a school we thrive on being at the forefront of teaching and learning in the Island as well as being a strong testament to staff skills and ability. We are recognised as lead practitioners in Jersey. We have many visits from staff from other schools, keen to engage in professional dialogue with us. Your children are learning from some of the very best practitioners Jersey has to offer.

So, my thanks go to all the class teachers and LSAs, as well as our pupils for their tireless hard work, enabling us to achieve high results and wonderful learning opportunities. I would like to welcome Mr Stuart Pallant as our new DHT and DSL and Mrs Helen Falle – school administrator, to our staff team. We were sorry that Mrs Love left us last term, but family commitments meant she had to leave Jersey and begin a new life in France/London. She was very sad to leave St John's.

I must also thank the PTA, who support the school in so many ways: Christmas Parties, Christmas gifts, the book and toy sales, and treats for the children. We are grateful for your commitment, your hard work and the funds you have raised. These have helped to pay for Year 6 Leavers' books, Numbots and Times table Rockstars across the school. Natalie Jardine and her team work so hard and I would like to thank them for planning, organising and carefully thinking through events. Thank you to the committed PTA team who turn up to meetings, write agendas and minutes, budget the funds, think of fund raisers and then organise them. We are grateful to Elisa our Treasurer, who is leaving us this term. She has worked tirelessly in supporting the committee. We now welcome new members to the team who will work and support our PTA during this academic year.

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We know that a busy, exciting term lie ahead. I'd like to thank you, our parents, for your support and commitment to the school. We know that together we can make the children's learning experience the best it can possibly be.

We are so fortunate to have Mrs Maggie Eldridge Morotzek as our Senior Adviser. Mrs Eldridge Morotzek, challenges us with our practice and ensures that we maintain our high standards. We engage in deep, purposeful professional conversations and she has been a true friend to our school, supporting us when we needed it and being sacrificial with her time.

We look forward to working in partnership with you throughout this academic year.

Trudie De La Haye ~Headteacher

PTA AGM

September 2020