

# ST MICHAEL'S PREPARATORY SCHOOL, JERSEY

## INDEPENDENT EVALUATION

### 1. BRIEF CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 St Michael's School is a mixed preparatory school for pupils aged between three and fourteen. It was opened in 1949 and is the only prep school on the island of Jersey preparing pupils for Common Entrance and Senior School Scholarships. It is set in a variety of buildings in its own grounds in the St Saviour area of Jersey. The governors, who are directors of the companies, which run the school, are also trustees of the charitable trust.
- 1.2 The school is a Christian foundation which aims to provide a happy environment in which each child is nurtured to do 'a little bit better' than anyone thought possible. Emphasis is placed on standards of behaviour, presentation and good manners.
- 1.3 The Pre-prep is for Years 1 and 2 and includes the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). The Junior School is for Years 3 and 4. The Main Prep School is for Years 5 to 8.
- 1.4 The ability profile of the school is above the national average. The school has identified 68 pupils who have additional needs and they all receive support, whether one-to-one or in groups. No pupil has a statement of educational need.
- 1.5 The recommendations of the last inspection have been noted. However, it is not appropriate to make specific comment in this report on the school's response, because of the time that has elapsed.
- 1.6 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school. The year group nomenclature used by the school and its National Curriculum (NC) equivalence are shown in the following tables.

#### ***Early Years Foundation Stage Setting***

School	NC name
Nursery	Nursery
PPAB, PPAD	Reception

#### ***Pre-preparatory Junior Department***

School	NC name
PPBH, PPBR	Year 1
PPCG, PPCM	Year 2
Form 1	Year 3
Form 2	Year 4

#### ***Main School***

School	NC name
Form 3	Year 5
Form 4	Year 6
Form 5	Year 7
Form 6	Year 8

## **2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL**

### **2. Main findings (Summary)**

- 2.1 Pupils at St Michael's are extremely well-educated in accordance with the school's aims. Their overall achievement is always at least good and frequently excellent. They have high levels of knowledge, understanding and skills across the curriculum. Pupils of all abilities make good and frequently rapid progress. This is strongly supported by their outstanding attitudes to their learning, and the positive way in which they approach all the activities which they undertake. Pupils have been successful in gaining places to a range of schools in Jersey and mainland England. A significant proportion gain awards to their senior school, many in highly competitive entry.
- 2.2 The school's curriculum is good with some excellent features. It ensures that pupils have access to an all-round education which suits their abilities and interests and prepares them efficiently for each stage of their education. For younger pupils the emphasis is on core skills. For older pupils the curriculum reflects the preparation necessary for entrance to senior school. The systems for identifying and supporting pupils who need additional help work well. Pupils' experiences are enriched by educational visits and workshops, and an excellent range of extra-curricular activities. The overall quality of teaching is good and frequently excellent. Pupils benefit from the knowledge and enthusiasm of their teachers. Lessons are conducted at a brisk pace and teachers have high expectations that their pupils can succeed. Pupils feel confident to ask for help and know that they will receive it. Less able pupils are well supported in lessons. On occasions, the most able do not always receive additional challenges. Teachers use a range of assessment to track pupils' progress efficiently.
- 2.3 The quality of pupils' personal development is outstanding. They are proud of their school and enjoy their education. The school's core values are reflected across the community. The pupils display an emotional maturity without the veneer of bravado or the wish to appear superficially streetwise. They develop an outstanding moral sense based on the school's Christian principles. Pupils develop socially and culturally extremely well. The excellent pastoral system, underpinned by appropriate policies and procedures, ensures that the pastoral care of pupils is strong and matches the school's aim to help each pupil to achieve more than anticipated. Pupils are well-rounded individuals who are confident to give of their best. Each pupil is considered as an individual and the staff have a clear understanding of their strengths and areas for development. Relationships between staff and pupils are excellent.
- 2.4 The quality of governance is good. The board has a range of skills to provide sufficient challenge and support for the school, and appropriate committees are in place. The quality of leadership is outstanding and ensures that the vision for the school is shared by the whole community. Management is good. Senior and middle management roles are being clarified. Communication within the school has improved and the pastoral care system has been strengthened. The systematic monitoring of teaching and learning by managers is in the early stages of development.

### **3 Action points**

#### **Recommendations for further improvement**

2.5 The school is advised to make the following improvements.

1. Clarify and strengthen the role of middle managers (Heads of department and subject-co-ordinators) to ensure that effective monitoring of teaching and learning takes place consistently across the school.
2. Seek ways to improve the quality of teaching further by enabling teachers to share best practice and ensure that lessons consistently include challenge for the most able pupils.
3. Review the use of assessment across the school.
4. Develop cohesion across the EYFS to ensure continuity for children's learning.

### **INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

The inspectors observed 40 lessons which included all full-time teachers, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with senior members of staff and with the chair of governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the visit, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. The responses of parents and pupils to the school's questionnaire were considered, and the inspectors examined documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Lady Fiona Mynors: Reporting Inspector for ISI, former IAPS

Peter Lee-Smith: Reporting Inspector for ISI and former IAPS head

Sara Robinson: Early Years Lead Inspector and former pre-prep head of IAPS school

This evaluation is based on a schedule agreed with the school. It follows the basic outline used in the inspection of independent schools in the UK. Judgements will be comparable to those of schools inspected on the English mainland. It is not a formal Ofsted or ISI (Independent Schools Inspectorate) report but one commissioned by the school from Critical Friends Ltd.