

**External review 16 – 19 October 2023**  
**St John's School (SJS), King Richard School (KRS) - Cyprus.**  
**Headteachers – Colin Guyton (SJS), Richard Sproson (KRS).**

**Review Team:**

Helen Reeves (External Consultant)

Damon Donaldson DCS

Cheryse Shephard DCS

Steve Dixon - Deputy Headteacher SJS, Chris Thomas and George Burvill Deputy Headteachers KRS.

**Agreed objectives:**

- Facilitate opportunities for professional dialogue/challenge between senior leaders from both schools.
- Evaluate the quality of education through a range of activities – lesson visits, pupil and staff forums, conversations with leaders regarding effectiveness of safeguarding, provision for pupils with additional needs and the 6<sup>th</sup> Form. Discussions with parents and Governors.
- Develop senior leaders' evaluative skills.
- Test out the accuracy of leader's self-evaluation.
- Provide leadership training for subject leaders.

**Documents provided prior to the review:**

1. Completed self-evaluation analysis.
2. School development plan.

**Activities prior to visit with school leaders (on teams):**

1. Initial introductions, agree scope of review.
2. Detailed planning meeting.
3. Discussion of schools' current context, strengths, and priorities.

It was agreed with leaders prior to the visit to schedule regular opportunities for discussion, throughout and at the end of each day to allow leaders to talk about the effectiveness of what they had seen and make their own notes. At the end of the second day in each school the team were joined by their Station Commander, Andy Yeomans (DCS) and Gareth Flemington (DCS) for a verbal summary of the two days.

**Summary: St John's School**

**Context:** Following a long period of instability, a new Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher were appointed 12 months ago; they have worked at pace. The SLT have prioritised improving pupils' attendance, support for subject leaders to develop curriculum intent, redefine new assessment protocols, improve pupils' examination preparation and accuracy of staff predictions, through refined moderation processes; all this work remains high priority. The headteacher has completed a thorough evaluation of all aspects of school identifying priorities and next steps in the current School Improvement Plan.

Collaborative work with staff has agreed new school values of ***Integrity, Commitment, Respect*** and identified the behaviours associated with each value.

The school improvement plan is divided into the agreed priorities with the overarching vision of: ***Eliminating disadvantaged caused by mobility.***

Summary of the review:

## **What is it like to be a pupil at St John's School?**

### ***In the most effective lessons:***

- Teachers ensure that pupils understand what they are learning and why.
- Teachers use a range of strategies to check that pupils understand what they are learning and adapt their teaching accordingly.
- Teachers facilitate discussion that demands pupils' concentration and engagement in the lesson, they flourish in their learning as active participants.
- Teachers skillfully plan and facilitate activities that deepen pupils' understanding.
- Tight well-established routines are in place to ensure that lesson time is maximised.
- Teachers are deliberate in their preparation of well-structured resources that support pupils' learning.
- Teachers are deliberate in their questioning to deepen understanding and pose further questions, pupil accountability remains high.
- Teachers monitor pupils' progress throughout the lesson – the use of whiteboards is particularly effective to support this.
- Pupils are given regular opportunities to work collaboratively, they listen well to each other, and feel safe to express their views.
- Teachers regularly interact with classwork (evidence seen in books), teachers use this information to make decisions about their next steps in the lesson.
- Teachers share success criteria with the class and pupils are provided with a range of resources to assist them in their learning.
- Teachers use a range of strategies to feedback to pupils about their learning.
- Expectations are high and pupils are proud of the work that they produce.

### **However, in some lessons:**

- Teachers do not always make it explicit what pupils are learning or provide success criteria; too often planning is driven by a list of tasks to complete.
- Expectations are too low of what pupils can achieve academically and behaviourally.
- Teachers do not circulate the room to check for understanding or deliberately intervene where they know pupils need support.
- Teachers' questioning is random, some pupils remain passive and disengaged with their learning. Deliberate questioning techniques are underdeveloped.
- Pupils are not routinely asked to think hard about their learning.
- Teacher's questions are too easy and not linked close enough to the overall learning objective of the lesson, consequently the teacher does not have an accurate picture of what pupils have learnt in the lesson.
- Teacher feedback is limited to verbal discussion with pupils.
- Interaction with pupils' work in books is inconsistent across subjects.
- The absence of shared success criteria meant that pupils were unclear about what they were learning, conversations were limited to what they were doing.
- Very little emphasis is placed on subject specific terminology, some teachers allowed pupils to get away without the using the correct words.
- Promoting reading and developing pupil's literacy is not prioritised in teachers' daily planning.

### **Further considerations**

- How can leaders develop teachers' confidence to plan and implement reading/literacy strategies into their daily planning.
- How can teachers learn from the excellent examples of class discussion to develop confidence across the teaching team to facilitate regular oracy in lessons?

- In lessons (examination classes both KS4 & 5) where pupils are given autonomy over how to record their lesson - How effectively have pupils been taught about how to make notes that are useful and informative for revision?
- How well are pupils taught about revision techniques and how to use the revision guide as an invaluable tool for revisions?
- Review the curriculum intent for identified subjects to ensure that there is clarity and understanding of how identified disciplinary and substantive knowledge is being developed over time.
- Where pupil undertake the same practical activity, how can additional requirements be placed on the activity to provide another dimension of planning/thinking for the pupil.
- Do seating arrangements in some classrooms limit collaborative learning activities? How carefully do staff consider seating plans and how often are they adjusted as a result of AFL?
- How often are pupils spoken to about their learning in lessons? Do pupil voice activities currently feed into the QA processes within school? When speaking to pupils in lessons they were more comfortable explaining what they were doing as opposed to explaining what and why they were learning the specific content in the lesson.

Conducting lesson visits with subject leaders required detailed evaluation of the quality of education in lessons. This activity was welcomed by all staff, and they were insightful and accurate in their judgments. What remains a priority for the school is agreeing the role these leaders play in regular QA activities, how do they use what they see in lessons to drive up quality of provision and outcomes? This will place them at the heart of quality assurance and hold them to account for the development of their teams.

#### **Implementation priorities (additional to comments above):**

1. Ensure that well selected/structured activities in lessons encourage all pupils to ***think hard*** about their learning.
2. Broaden the range of strategies used by teachers to ***check that pupils have understood*** their work, enabling teachers to adapt their next steps accordingly.
3. To increase the opportunities for discussion between pupils as a valuable tool for ***deepening thinking and discussing learning***.
4. Develop teachers' confidence to promote ***oracy in lessons***.
5. Ensure that information about pupils is readily available to teachers so that they actively use this to ***plan their lessons to meet the needs*** of all pupils.

#### **Safeguarding:**

- Safeguarding systems are effective, there are robust processes in place to train staff and take swift action when concerns are raised.
- Leaders have a comprehensive understanding of the needs of pupils and the very specific contextual needs of pupils living and being educated within the military setting.
- Leaders use the analytics well to identify potential trends to ensure that appropriate support and action is taken.
- Bullying is dealt with swiftly.
- Some pupils referred to inappropriate sexual language that is used in school by small groups of pupils. This was raised with leaders during the visit.
- Staff attend a safeguarding briefing every week, this allows the sharing of key information to support pupils.
- Low level concerns policy is required – this is to be addressed by leaders.

#### **Leadership of SEND – supporting pupils with additional needs.**

- Information provided by the SENDCO regarding pupils' additional needs is comprehensive, parents and pupils are involved in the collation of this information to ensure that a complete picture is provided.
- Teachers' use of this information is currently inconsistent, there is more work to do by leaders to ensure that teachers understand their core responsibility when planning to meet additional need.
- Current quality assurance processes do not provide an accurate picture of how effectively this information is used by teachers; subject leaders are currently not involved in checking that their teams are using this information in their planning.

### **Pupils say:**

- They are proud of their school and complementary of the relationships they have with their teachers, they feel safe and enjoy school.
- Home learning is inconsistent across subjects.
- They do not always know how well they are doing in some subjects. Where they are clear about how to improve, they explain that the teachers regularly provide whole class feedback, feedback on extended writing, verbal support, and use of green pen. Some pupils say that their books are not looked at by their teachers.
- Some of their teachers are very welcoming and connect with them as individuals. This is not always the case as some pupils suggest that a small minority of their teachers are moody and unpredictable.
- They do not feel that teachers are consistent when dealing with poor behaviour.
- Praise and rewards are not consistently used by all teachers; however, they really appreciate postcards that they can share with their parents.
- At times they hear or are victims of inappropriate insults from other pupils. Some of these insults are homophobic whilst other comments are about pupils' physical appearance.
- Behaviour across year 9 has improved.
- They welcome the support they are given by teachers to settle into school. Transition into KS5 is well managed and much appreciated by pupils.
- Some girls have experienced inappropriate sexualised comments from the boys and despite raising their concerns they feel that these behaviours continue from a small minority of pupils.

### **Staff say:**

- They feel energised by new the new leadership in school, they welcome stability and clear direction. Staff are unanimous in their view that school has improved over the last 12 months.
- Morale is improving, this is intrinsically linked to the feeling of stability after a period of change.
- They feel listened to and valued.
- Purchasing resources for their curriculum can be a slow and cumbersome process, in subjects like science that can present issues for practicals that need to be taught.
- Staff are unanimous in their pride in the school; they enjoy their job.

### **Governance:**

- Governors are very appreciative of the passion with which the Headteacher leads the school. They recognise that the last twelve months have been a rollercoaster and acknowledge the challenges within the school and wider educational landscape.
- Both the Head and the Deputy Headteacher have real drive and energy which have been instrumental in how much has been achieved since their appointments.
- Governors can identify clearly the strengths and priorities of the school.
- The Headteacher's objectivity and professionalism are key to the improvement journey of the school, these professional behaviours are gradually disseminating throughout the school. The connection and growing synergy with KRS is crucial to mutual support and development across the two schools.

- Governors identify the following priorities for school – Improve 6<sup>th</sup> form provision, increased leadership capacity, growing teacher expertise and recruitment, addressing the challenges of the military setting.
- Governors encourage brave leadership to support and drive what they consider to be a very fertile and exciting chapter in the school's history.

Middle leaders training took place on day 2. This session was documented by leaders.

The headteacher provided a self-evaluation document prior to the visit. In my opinion his current judgment of the school is accurate. There is strong practice in school, however, currently provision is inconsistent and not all pupils receive the same high quality learning experiences across the curriculum.

Leaders, in particular the Headteacher and newly appointed Deputy Headteacher have an accurate picture of their school and detailed plans for rapid, yet sustained improvement are in place. Middle leaders are a priority for development; their willingness and insight throughout the two days was impressive. They will need support from senior leaders, but also need to galvanise their collective potential as a team to drive their departments, this will ultimately benefit the experience that pupils have and their own professional development as leaders.

***How can the two schools learn from each other.***

1. Joint senior leaders' and subject leader QA activity – providing synergy, support, and collaboration.
2. Classroom layout – KRS staff display real confidence in their teaching spaces, they use the layout of classrooms highly effectively for discussion, circulation, and moving pupils around as a result of checking for understanding.
3. KRS classrooms regularly encourage discussion and debate - how can this be replicated and developed in SJS?

Both schools are unique, they have their history and context, 4 days working together demonstrated the value of collaboration. Despite the schools being at different stages of their own journey, the conversation and debate throughout the four days enabled professionals to listen and learn from each other. The number of staff involved in the 4 days was extensive and will have developed and sharpened evaluative skills at every level across both schools.

It was both a joy and a privilege to shape this experience with you and I thank you for asking me to work alongside the two schools. I wish you all well as you continue to build exceptional schools.

***Helen Reeves***  
***26 October 2023.***