



GUERNSEY GRAMMAR SCHOOL AND SIXTH FORM CENTRE

Validation report

Validation dates:	25–27 February 2014
Lead validator:	David Scott
Type of school:	Selective secondary 11–16 and Baliwick Sixth Form Centre with comprehensive intake
Age range of learners:	11–19
Gender of learners:	Mixed
Number on roll:	906
Of which, are in the sixth form:	425
Headteacher:	Christine Watson
Date of previous school validation:	5–7 October 2010
School address:	Les Varendes, St Andrews, Guernsey GY6 8TD
Telephone number:	01481 256571

Introduction

The validation was carried out by a team of six validators, who spent three days in the school observing lessons, talking with students and looking at their work, engaging in discussions with staff and parents, looking at school records and other documentation, and scrutinising returns to the parents' questionnaire.

Description of the school

- Since the last post-validation visit in November 2012, there has been a 45% turnover in staff.
- There are slightly more girls than boys. Two students speak English as an additional language.
- The school has deemed 18% of students, with equal numbers of boys and girls, as having special educational needs and/or learning disabilities. Seven per cent of students are deemed to be at School Action. One per cent of these students are deemed to be at School Action Plus and so receive a higher level of provision.
- The school has identified literacy, and specific learning difficulties as the main areas of need.
- Students enter the school with skills that are generally in line with or above those expected for their age when compared with the mainland. In 2013 some 60% of all Year 13 students took up full-time places at university, with the remainder proceeding to employment or training.
- In recent years, the school's roll has been declining due to island demographic changes. Currently, senior and middle staff roles and responsibilities are being realigned.

Making judgements

The school and validators used a five-point scale to evaluate the school's performance. The scale is as follows:

1. Excellent
2. Well developed
3. Proficient
4. Less than proficient
5. Underdeveloped

Summary for parents

- Students' enjoyment and achievement are well developed. Most are keen to learn and engage well with their studies. Students' achievement in GCSE examinations varied between subjects in 2013 although the proportion achieving five or more A*- C grades, including English and mathematics, was similar to that for selective schools in England. In lessons observed, students typically made good progress and gained the knowledge, skills and understanding set out in the teachers' learning intentions. However, in some cases, the more able could achieve more with better use of assessment to plan for their needs. Students have generally good speaking and reading skills but there is room for improvement in the accuracy and organisation of some of their writing. In the sixth form, standards in AS and A levels were uneven between subjects in 2013. The evidence of this validation indicates, however, that the current sixth form students' enjoyment and achievement are well developed. They have good recall of learning, engage well with their studies and show good levels of understanding of their work. However, as in Key Stages 3 and 4, in some lessons more could be expected of the more able and there is inconsistency in the quality of written work.
- Students' personal development and well-being are well developed. They are very confident and they are sensitive to the needs of others. They have a secure understanding of the importance of a healthy lifestyle. Students develop a sound sense of responsibility overall. However, where teaching is pedestrian learning is sometimes disrupted by low level misbehaviour. Students show strong levels of engagement in school activities and they readily participate in community endeavours. Many parents who submitted written comments in the parental questionnaire would welcome better home-school communications.
- Teaching and assessment are well developed. In the best lessons, teaching is challenging and engaging and classroom management is strong. Teachers have high expectations, strong subject knowledge and a good understanding of examination requirements. Lesson planning is variable and higher attaining students do not always experience sufficient challenge in their lessons. Feedback to students on how to improve their work and the setting of homework are inconsistent across the school.
- The curriculum is well developed and fully meets the requirements of the Bailiwick Curriculum statement. It contributes well to students' personal development and provides an excellent range of high-quality enrichment activities. Transition across phases is generally well managed but the curriculum is not planned systematically to raise students' attainment in literacy, oracy and numeracy.

- The school provides well-developed care, guidance and support for its students. High levels of care and excellent pastoral arrangements for the transition from primary and secondary schools ensure that students settle happily and confidently into their new school. However, the transition to a new academic environment is not as well managed and some students are not fully prepared for the change. Improved systems are increasing attendance and setting higher expectations. The monitoring of academic progress and the electronic collection of assessment information are improving but are not yet fully used to accelerate students' learning and progress.
- The school's self-evaluation is proficient. It is accurate in some areas but it is over-generous in others. It involves staff and students and many parents. It provides a good platform for improvement because the right priorities are identified.
- Leadership and management are well developed. The headteacher has raised expectations and is driving forward positive change, with the staff fully in support. Middle leaders are increasingly involved in monitoring and improving the quality of teaching.
- The capacity to improve is well developed. The school has a helpful improvement plan which reflects realistically the main priorities for the school. There is a clear determination among the staff to sustain standards and continue to improve the rigour of the assessment procedures. There are also well-advanced plans to increase the frequency of central checks on the students' performance.

Main areas for school improvement

- Make better use of assessment in planning so that work and resources provide suitable levels of challenge for all students, including the more able.
- Raise standards in literacy by:
 - providing all students with essential proof-reading skills and ensuring that they use them
 - ensuring that basic errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar are noted and followed up in the course of the marking process
 - insisting on the highest standards of presentation in students' written work
 - developing consistent whole-school approaches to the teaching and assessment of the organisation of extended writing.
- Continue to develop data systems that meet in full the needs of the school and ensure that the staff make the best use of the information available.
- Increase the regularity and effectiveness of monitoring the quality of teaching and:
 - take prompt action to improve practice where the need is identified
 - ensure that homework is regularly set, completed and marked and that its quality and quantity make a strong contribution to students' learning
 - improve the consistency of marking so that it provides students with clear signposts for improvement and is detailed enough to raise attainment in written work.