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## Jersey Standards for Independent Schools Inspection of Helvetia House School

14 Elizabeth Place  
St Helier  
Jersey  
J2 3PN

Proprietor: David Atkinson  
Headteacher: Lindsey Woodward  
Inspection date: 26-27 November 2025

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### Summary

To be a child at Helvetia House School is to be enveloped in a warm, friendly and welcoming environment. Strong respectful, considerate and trusting relationships between staff and pupils are a hallmark of the school. Pupils rapidly develop into mature, thoughtful and responsible individuals directly as a result of the high levels of praise, encouragement and recognition that they receive during their time at this school. Parents are quick to report that staff and leaders convey 'a clear passion; a genuine desire to give our children the best start in life'.

The school's curriculum ensures that pupils develop and achieve well across a suitably broad range of core and foundation subjects. The quality of teaching is effective, well-qualified staff allied with regular and relevant professional development and training ensure teachers' strong subject knowledge. As a result, staff consistently provide stimulating and engaging activities with pupils enthusiastic about their learning and showing positive attitudes. On occasion, pupils would benefit from teachers' more detailed explanations of the characteristics of a high-quality piece of work, so that pupils are better able to achieve their very best.

Staff know their pupils well, closely monitor their progress and promptly provide encouragement, guidance and praise. The small number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are a key part of this warm and supportive school environment so that they make strong progress in their personal, social and emotional development. Leaders recognise that on occasion some pupils with SEND require further adaptations such as visual aids, access to manipulatives or segmenting of learning activities so that they can better retain key skills and concepts.

Leaders have shown considerable drive and determination in responding to advice from representatives of Children, Young People, Education and Skills (CYPES), ensuring school policies are up to date, reflective of the school's context and comply with statutory requirements. Recent developments to the school's website have ensured that these revised policies are now more readily available to parents.

The headteacher holds an accurate and honest account of the school and has utilised her self-evaluation well to draw up an improvement plan. For example, the proprietor and headteacher recognise that improvements are required in their record keeping and monitoring of key information with arrangements already in place to ensure a more streamlined approach.

## Recommendations for improvement

The school should take the following actions:

Continue to develop provision and planning for pupils with SEND including those with more complex special educational needs by;

- including use of resources such as visual aids and manipulatives
- breaking up learning activities into smaller 'chunks' of learning

Ensure pupils are clear about the criteria of a good quality piece of work and are consistently challenged to produce these in their work by:

- encouraging teachers to model the use of specific techniques
- regularly providing exemplars, including by sharing pupils' high-quality outcomes with their peers
- recording the genre specific characteristics of good quality writing so that pupils use these to proofread and edit their own work

Improve record keeping to ensure that information on staff recruitment and training are well-organised and amalgamated. Then to use leaders' monitoring to identify well in advance where information or training needs updating.

## Standard 1: The Quality of Education Provided

### The standards relating to quality of education are met

#### Comment:

##### Curriculum

An overall curriculum policy is in place, with additional individual policies for the core subject areas of reading, writing and mathematics. The school's policies set out guiding principles for each subject studied and the range of subjects covers the full requirements of the Jersey curriculum. Reading is clearly prioritised in curriculum planning; setting out choices of text and detailing provision for the teaching of phonics.

Curriculum overviews are in place, containing age-appropriate long-term plans for foundation subjects, personal, social and health education (PSHE) and science. Planning for the youngest pupils in pre-prep class follows the early years foundation stage (EYFS) curriculum. Curriculum planning looks to build children's learning and development from their starting points on entry to the school, so that they are well prepared to reach the early learning goals and a good level of development (GLD).

The school uses the Jersey curriculum for PSHE with their own ordering of relevant topics for the different year groups with content pitched age-appropriately. Through PSHE in particular, older pupils are prepared well for life outside the school and equally, for the next stage of their education. The computing curriculum has a strong thread of e-safety running throughout and similarly, its content prepares pupils well for secondary education.

An assessment policy is in place, which covers formative and summative types of assessment. Teachers spoken to talk knowledgeably about how they use their knowledge of pupils and informal formative assessment to gauge their curriculum planning as well as drawing on local resources. Within the taught curriculum and daily extra-curricular enrichment programmes, many aspects of Jersey culture and society are covered and celebrated.

##### Teaching

Pre-prep aged children are provided with stimulating and engaging activities that help to develop their literacy and numeracy skills. For example, in an engaging problem-solving activity, children confidently recognise 2 digit numbers between 10 and 20. They develop their personal and social skills cooperating and taking turns, with children interacting well and joining in each other's imaginary role play. The circumstances of the premises make ease of access to outdoor learning difficult for Early Years children

Teaching across the school is effective. Relationships between staff and pupils are strong throughout the school, built around courtesy and trust, with pupils behaving well and showing consistently positive attitudes to work. Lessons are characterised by a hum of activity with pupils actively engaged and concentrating closely on the task in hand. A relatively small number of pupils with more specific educational needs are occasionally in need of more support at an individual level. Factors that would suggest that a focus on provision for pupils with SEND and additional support is a valid area for future whole school development.

Teachers are well-qualified and are regularly provided with ongoing professional training that ensure that their subject knowledge is strong and used well to inform their planning and practice. Teachers know their pupils well and, particularly where class sizes are small, regularly scan and move around the classroom to provide support and guidance. In some lessons pupils would benefit from more specific teaching strategies, such as teacher

modelling or specific instruction of techniques so that pupils are clear about the characteristics of a high-quality piece of work and can apply this information to improve their own work.

Activities in science are well resourced so that pupils show particularly high levels of engagement. Practical scientific investigations are prized and enjoyed. For example, pupils in Years 1 and 2 carefully handle pipettes to administer droplets of water to check a material's absorbency. In the main, pupils' work is well-presented, although pupils' recording of results in science was a little haphazard, requiring a little more accuracy in order for pupils to draw and make conclusions.

Pupils clearly enjoy reading, regularly using lively expression and intonation to bring the text alive. Pupils describe their appreciation of the opportunities for quiet reading and of the increased availability of high-quality texts. A particular strength of the school's provision is in helping pupils develop their early reading skills. Pupils regularly read with a staff member who, in their warm praise and support, promotes pupils' confidence and enjoyment of reading well.

## **Standard 2: Pupil Behaviour and Personal Development**

### **The standards relating to behaviour and personal development are met**

#### **Comment:**

The Religious Education and PSHE curriculums promote acceptance, equity and interest in other faiths and beliefs. Pupils appreciate assemblies: demonstrating real respect for staff and their peers and enjoying each other's achievements. Pupils develop their confidence within a warm and nurturing atmosphere, where kindness and joy in life are thoroughly promoted. Pupils' conduct into and out of the assembly and on the school trip to the cinema is exemplary. It is charming to note how the older pupils enthusiastically take responsibility for the youngest children.

Pupils have many opportunities to participate in and practise democratic decision-making through their own elections and their learning about the States Assembly and elections. In this way, pupils get to see and experience a balanced range of different views with no particular emphasis on partisan views.

Codes of conduct are well-established, and sensible rules promote an orderly atmosphere and lead to respectful routines in and out of the classrooms. Minor misdemeanours are dealt with in a restorative way and with an emphasis on individuality, non-judgemental attitudes and a fresh start for pupils. On the rare occasions where sanctions need to be implemented, these are fairly and proportionately applied.

Through the taught curriculum, assemblies, the PSHE programme, the house system, rewards, commendations and extra-curricular activities staff ensure that pupils are actively taught about fundamental Jersey values, the local culture and traditions. In addition, the curriculum helps pupils look further outside the school to issues and challenges they may face as they grow older and prepare them for the next stage in their education.

## Standard 3: Pupil Safeguarding and Welfare

### The standards relating to pupil safeguarding and welfare are met

#### Comment:

The school's safeguarding arrangements place an appropriate emphasis on the needs of the child. Case files and records confirm that designated safeguarding leaders act proactively in sharing any concerns and in closely monitoring pupils' safety. Leaders' actions have helped to reduce the risk of harm and have helped to maintain children's wellbeing and welfare.

Pupils report that they feel safe and are confident that staff will respond to any matters they raise. Staff are integral part of the school's approach to pupils' safeguarding and welfare. Staff know their children well and closely monitor and are responsive to, any change in mood or emotions. In seeking improvements, leaders have acted swiftly to adopt a recognised and locally approved proforma that formally records where ongoing minor concerns, currently maintained well by class teachers, build towards a threshold for referral.

Admissions and attendance registers meet requirements. Clear first aid procedures for recording accidents are in place, Jersey Council Health and Safety recording procedures are adopted by the school, with accidents logged and shared with parents through phone contact or through providing them with a copy of the reporting form at the end of the school day. Staff training in first aid is up to date, with two staff members currently holding qualifications in paediatric first aid.

## Standard 4: Suitability of Staff and Proprietors

### The standards in relation to suitability of staff and proprietors are met

#### Comment:

Leaders ensure appropriate pre-recruitment checks are in place that meet requirements. The school employs a small number of staff and holds records of all of the appropriate and required checks on the suitability of each member of staff.

However, record keeping of recruitment checks and of staff training would be enhanced with a clearer collation of the information held and currently stored separately, into a single comprehensive register. On occasion photocopies of teachers' professional qualifications are in duplicate and stored in separate places. Adaptations are underway to reorganise the current arrangements of storing recruitment checks, a collation that will allow leaders to identify well in advance where checks on staff and professional training require updating.

## Standard 5: Suitability of School Premises

### The standards in relation to the suitability of school premises are met

#### Comment:

Overall, the premises are maintained well and pay appropriate consideration to the restrictions of a Grade II listed building so that all standards are met. The premises are warm and comfortable, and every inch of wall space contains attractive and lively displays of pupils' work.

The proprietor completes regular health and safety checks and manages a rolling programme of maintenance of the building, deliberately planning maintenance in the school holidays to avoid the presence of contractors on site when pupils are in school.

Following the site tour with the proprietor a small number of suggestions were offered to further improve the functionality of the premises.

## Standard 6: Provision of Information

**The standards in relation to the provision of information are met**

**Comment:**

Parents spoken to are universally happy with the amount of information they receive about; events, pupils' academic progress, any policy information required, and parents' consultations. They appreciate the personal tours they have with the headteacher around the school whilst it is running. Parents report that the school's reputation is a big draw locally, together with the history and traditions. The school uniform is instantly recognisable and pupils' courtesy and good manners are well-regarded.

Parents find the school leaders and staff completely approachable and know that they can come in and work through any of their concerns or problems. They acknowledge that they may not always agree with decisions made initially, but once they have talked this through, they understand and accept these. They feel listened to and understood and the headteacher takes the time to explain the school's decisions and rationale.

## Standard 7: Parental Complaints

**The standards in relation to parental complaints are met**

**Comment:**

The school meets the requirements in relation to responding to any parental complaints. It has a complaints policy that gives parents recourse to informal procedures from the outset prior to escalation to a written complaints procedure where required. The policy makes clear that all written complaints will be considered and provides clear timescales to acknowledge receipt and in providing a response. The policy makes provision for confidentiality to be maintained with files accessible solely to senior staff.

The school maintains clear and regular communication with parents. Ongoing communication books for each child and the calendar of events on the school's website ensure that parents are kept well-informed. As a result, the school report that parental complaints, even at the informal level are few and rare. No complaints have required escalation to a formal written complaint.

## Standard 8: The Quality of Leadership and Management

**The standards in relation to leadership and management are met**

**Comment:**

The headteacher's honest and accurate self-evaluation has been utilised effectively to identify key priorities for improvement. School development planning is aimed appropriately at prioritising and addressing key areas of improvement.

A close and supportive staff team are provided with clear direction and leadership, and form part of a consistent school approach in creating a warm and positive learning environment. Leaders ensure that pupils develop their social and emotional skills well and carry out responsibilities that contribute to a friendly and thoughtful school.

The proprietor regularly meets with senior leaders and plays an active role in financial matters, in maintaining the school's premises and in the monitoring of the health and safety of the school site, including drawing on considerable expertise to monitor the school's electrical and fire safety.

The headteacher leads teaching and learning by example, modelling strengths through her daily teaching commitment and in the vibrancy and enthusiasm she brings to her leadership role. A close and supportive staff team are part of the school's successful promotion of pupils' social and emotional development, in developing pupils' positive attitudes to learning and in the school's highly successful promotion of pupils' thoughtful, courteous and friendly behaviour. Leaders know which areas of their planning, monitoring and record keeping are not yet well-organised and they have plans in place to address these areas.

## Information about the school

**Age range of pupils:** 5-11

**Gender of pupils:** Girls

**Number of pupils on the school roll:** 75

**School telephone number:** 01534 724928

**School website:** [www.helvetia.org.uk](http://www.helvetia.org.uk)

Helvetia House School is a small independent school for girls. It has been run by the same family since January 1889. The school attracts primary aged pupils from across Jersey.

- The school does not have any pupils eligible for Jersey Premium.
- A very small minority of pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportions of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are lower than in most Jersey schools.

## Information about the inspection

This inspection was carried out at the Minister's request. Judgements were made against the Jersey Standards for Independent Schools only. These standards are based on the statutory requirements of Education (Jersey) Law, 1999 and are the minimum standards required to be met in all independent schools in Jersey. The inspectors did not conduct a full Jersey School Review.

- Extended discussions were held with the headteacher, the proprietor, teaching and support staff.
- Visits to lessons were made in all year groups across the school and samples of pupils' work across different subjects were considered.
- Informal and formal discussions were held with pupils about their work and the way the school ensures their safety and wellbeing.
- A tour was made of the school's site to check its security and safety. Documents including a range of risk assessments, were scrutinised.
- The inspection team met with a small group of parents.
- A wide range of documents, policies and curriculum plans were considered.
- Safeguarding records and staff recruitment files were sampled and reviewed.

## The inspection team

This inspection was commissioned by the Department for Children, Young People, Education and Skills. The inspection team consisted of two off-Island inspectors.

Enquiries about this report should be addressed to Head School Review and Inspection Service, Children, Young People, Education and Skills (CYPES), Government of Jersey, Floor 2, Union Street, St Helier, Jersey. JE2 3DN