

Graham Reeves Ltd

for

The Isle of Man Department of Education, Sport and Culture

External Validation of the School Self-Review and Evaluation

Foxdale Primary School

Introduction

Each school on the Isle of Man is expected to conduct a School Self-Review and Evaluation (SSRE) using an approach devised by the Department of Education, Sport and Culture (DESC) in consultation with the schools. Graham Reeves Ltd has been commissioned by the Department to carry out an external validation of each school's SSRE. The validation of the Foxdale SSRE included a visit to the school on Thursday 24 May 2018. The visit was made by Graham Reeves. He worked alongside Ann Jessopp, headteacher, and Caroline Savin, representing the DESC's Education Improvement Service.

Context

The school is one of the smallest on the Isle of Man. It is situated in the central area of the Island. The catchment area, which has recently been extended, consists of the village of Foxdale and the surrounding farms and rural area. It mainly comprises owner-occupied housing with some local authority accommodation. Most of the pupils live in Foxdale itself, although a few come from Douglas and Peel.

There are currently 74 pupils on roll. This number will increase next school year. Ten per cent of pupils receive free school meals. This is below the Island average. Fifteen percent of pupils are on the special educational needs (SEN) register. This is in line with the Island average. There are no pupils learning English as an additional language.

There are three classes, with 4.2 full-time equivalent teachers including the headteacher. There are 2.5 members of the classroom support staff.

The school was founded in the mid-nineteenth century and moved to its present site in 1991.

Focus of the Validation

The validation of the SSRE covered the full range of the school's judgments but focused on three specific aspects. These were:

- **Personal Development**
- **Management**
- **Keeping Safe**

Personal Development

The school judges this aspect as 'very effective'.

It was chosen for consideration in order to confirm that:

- The vast majority of relationships between pupils, and between pupils and teachers, are good
- Most pupils take pride in their work
- Most pupils get on and there are few disputes
- Pupils are relaxed and happy
- Pupils are well motivated and enjoy sharing their work
- Personal Development can be judged as 'very effective' overall.

Management

The school judges this aspect as 'effective'.

It was chosen for consideration in order to confirm that:

- Policies and procedures ensure that the day-to-day running of the school is effective
- Effective pupil tracking systems are in place that give up to date information on each pupil's attainment in science, English and mathematics
- High aspirations are established through target setting which challenges pupils
- School improvement priorities are used to set targets for teaching and support staff ensuring that all staff have input into school improvement
- Continued professional development is evaluated and linked to priorities for school improvement
- Management can be judged as 'effective' overall.

Keeping Safe

The school judges this aspect as 'effective'.

It was chosen for consideration in order to confirm that:

- The school has a policy for child protection and this is reviewed annually by all staff and governors
- E-safety is covered for each class at the start of the Autumn Term
- All members of the teaching staff have undertaken Child Protection Training Level 2
- Governors annually carry out a health and safety tour of the inside and outside of the school building
- Keeping safe can be judged as 'effective' overall.

The Validation Activities

To check and confirm the judgments in the SSRE the validation team:

- toured the school,
- observed lessons,
- observed playtime and lunchtime,

- looked at a number of documents,
- talked with a group of staff members,
- talked with a group of pupils,
- talked with a group of parents and carers.

Findings

Summary

The school knows itself well. It is therefore in a good position to plan for improvement.

Personal Development

Pupils are well motivated. They take pride in their work and enjoy sharing it. They are mostly relaxed and happy. There are good relationships between pupils, and between pupils and teachers. Pupils told the validation team that they have few disputes with each other but when they do occur they are usually resolved quickly.

Pupils are familiar with the '6Rs' learning dispositions and a large majority demonstrate good levels in each of them. Pupils develop well socially and emotionally.

The validation team concurs with the school's judgment that Personal Development is 'very effective'.

Management

The school has a full range of policies and procedures. These ensure that the day-to-day running of the school is effective. They are reviewed periodically in a collaborative exercise involving staff members.

There are tracking systems to record information on each pupil's attainment and achievement in science, English and mathematics. Termly pupil progress meetings are held to review and monitor this information. Progress of pupils on the SEN register is reviewed more frequently.

Pupil progress meetings are used to set challenging curriculum targets for individual pupils.

School improvement priorities are identified with staff. They are used to set performance management targets for teaching and support staff. Continued professional development is also linked to priorities for school improvement.

Communication systems are good across the school.

The validation team concurs with the school's judgment that Management is 'effective'.

Keeping Safe

The school's child protection policy is firmly based on the DESC model. It is reviewed annually by staff and governors. Other related policies are in place and have been reviewed within the past two years.

Pupils are taught about e-safety at the beginning of each school year and reminded about it at appropriate times.

All members of the teaching staff have undertaken Child Protection Training Level 2. They have also had First Aid Training.

The Governing Body fulfils its responsibility in relation to Health and Safety and conducts an annual Health and Safety tour of the school.

The validation team concurs with the school's judgment that Keeping Safe is 'effective'.

Other Areas Considered

As well as the three specific aspects of the SSRE on which it focused, the validation team also considered other judgments set out in the SSRE. It concurred with many of these judgments, including:

- Attainment is 'very effective' overall.
- Achievement against Prior Attainment is 'very effective'.
- Teachers are given time to carry out personal research to help them improve their practice.
- The teaching staff, support staff and a governor have reviewed the school's Vision. A draft of a new Vision has been discussed and amended by the School Council prior to being presented to parents for their comments and suggestions.
- Pupils are given the opportunity to direct their own learning.
- Teachers differentiate the learning so that all pupils are appropriately challenged and supported. They make efforts to provide equal opportunities for all pupils.
- There is a consistent approach to 'assessment for learning' across the school.
- Teachers tell pupils the learning objectives of lessons and use success criteria in most lessons.
- The school offers pupils a wide range of extra-curricular activities.
- Teachers make good use of the local environment to enhance pupils' learning and, wherever possible, put that learning in a Manx context.
- Partnerships with Parents and Carers is 'very effective'.
- The school holds regular moderation and training meetings with other small schools.

Conclusion

The school knows itself well. It is therefore in a good position to plan for improvement.

For the most part, the SSRE is comprehensive and follows the grade descriptors. In places, it needs to show a greater distinction between provision and outcomes.

Graham Reeves
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