

Ballakermeen High School

Ballakermeen High School recently took part in an external validation of its school self-review and evaluation process (SSRE). The validation covered the full range of the school's judgments, but focused on three specific aspects.

These were:

- Achievement against prior attainment
- Teaching for learning
- Keeping Safe

Achievement against prior attainment

The validation team agreed with the school's judgment that achievement against prior attainment is 'effective' overall. In five of the six measures used by the Department of Education, Sport and Culture (DESC), English and mathematics achievement is above the island's average. The DESC's analysis indicates that in one of the six measures used: average levels of progress in mathematics, the judgment is 'not yet effective'. Progress between Key Stage 2 and 4 is 'effective' in both English and mathematics.

The progress that pupils make in Key Stage 5 is impressive, with the team noting that the school has correctly judged this area as 'very effective'.

Evidence from lesson observations, discussions with pupils and surveys, supported by professional judgments, confirmed that pupils have developed a 'love of learning'. The school's data analysis shows that progress is very good in the majority of other subjects. Overall, pupils make very good progress in their learning.

Teaching for Learning

The school fosters and instils a 'can do' attitude in pupils and this motivates them to believe that they can be successful in their learning. In the lessons visited during the validation, pupil engagement with their learning was very good. The school has considerable evidence that this is usually the case. In some cases the learning objectives in lessons are not sufficiently focused on learning.

The validation team agreed with the school's view that Teaching for Learning should be judged as 'effective' overall.

Keeping Safe

'Keeping Safe' is an area of high priority within the school. In the validation team's discussions with pupils, teachers and parents, all spoke highly of the procedures for safeguarding and child protection.

The validation team agreed with the school's judgment that 'Keeping Safe' is 'very effective' overall.

Other areas considered

As well as the three specific aspects of the SSRE on which it focused, the validation team also considered other judgments and statements set out in the SSRE. It noted that:

- Pupils are happy and proud of their school

- Relationships between pupils, and between pupils and teachers, are very good
- Parents hold the school in high regard
- Positive relationships with parents is a strength of the school
- The Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3 transition programme is highly regarded by stakeholders
- Leadership of the school is 'very effective'
- Key Stage 5 attainment is 'very effective' and above the island averages
- Lesson observations and pupil feedback confirms that behaviour is generally very good
- The curriculum enables pupils to access learning opportunities that are varied, engaging and challenging
- Extra-curricular clubs and activities enable pupils to showcase their talents, skills and aspirations

Conclusion

The validation team agreed with the school about all judgments that it tested. The school knows itself well and is therefore in a good position to continue planning for future improvement. However, the school knows itself far better than the current SSRE captures and the SSRE requires improvement.

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