

Castle Rushen High School

Castle Rushen High School recently took part in an external validation of its school self-review and evaluation process which involved confirming the judgments the school made about itself across certain areas.

Three aspects were looked at in detail:

- **Personal Development**
- **Leadership**
- **Partnerships with Parents/Carers**

Personal Development

On the basis of the available evidence the validation team is just able to concur with the school's judgment that Personal Development should be judged as 'effective' overall.

Some groups of pupils display leadership skills and pupils described a range of formal and informal leadership opportunities in the school.

From limited evidence, it appears that most pupils demonstrate good levels of the 6Rs learning dispositions.

Most pupils are prepared for the next stage of their education, employment, self-employment or training.

Anecdotal evidence and observations support a view, rather than judgment, that pupils do develop socially and emotionally in an age-appropriate way.

Not enough evidence was provided to support an effective judgment about pupil well-being or pupils' enjoyment of reading.

Not all aspects of the framework's criteria for personal development were backed up by strong evidence. There is need for a more systematic, robust and rigorous collection of evidence to support this aspect of learning.

Leadership

On the basis of the available evidence the validation team concurs with the school's judgment that Leadership should be judged as 'effective' overall.

Leaders in the school have recently promoted the importance of making school improvement decisions based on evidence-based research. FACE has helped to establish a common direction for the school.

It is clear from discussions with colleagues and the evidence in 'scrapbooks' that the school improvement planning process is developing in the school. At the moment the SSRE is not sufficiently driving the school improvement planning process and is in need of much development, by, for example, including more evaluative evidence to support judgments.

Leaders are committed to running an inclusive school however there was insufficient evidence provided to support the statement that leaders have a clear and agreed understanding of educational inclusion in the school.

Partnerships with Parents/Carers

On the basis of the available evidence the validation team concurs with the school's judgment that Partnerships with Parents/Carers should be judged as 'very effective' overall.

The school is held in high regard by parents, pupils and staff. Anecdotal evidence provided by the school supports the judgment that the school makes a positive contribution to the improvement of the community and the lives of families. The school needs to gather and record evidence of this.

Feedback from parents/carers has already been used to improve open evenings and to formulate the school's mobile phone policy and is beginning to gather evidence about homework.

The school has built positive partnerships with the majority of families to support pupil learning. Parents are very positive about the information they receive about the progress of their child's learning. They believe the school to be welcoming and positive about building relationships with them and their children. They enthused about the very effective transition programme with primary schools. The school has a productive open-door policy.

Other Areas Considered

As well as the three specific aspects of the SSRE, the validation team also considered other judgments and statements set out in the SSRE. It concurred with several of these, including:

- Improving learning has been established as the central focus of the school.
- Student attitudes to learning are positive as indicated in the school's tracking.
- Attainment overall is 'not yet effective'. Key Stage 3 attainment is very effective. Key Stage 4 attainment is a strength for 2018 in Physical Education, French, Biology, Spanish and Drama.
- Achievement against Prior Attainment is 'not yet effective'. Key Stage 2 – Key Stage 4 achievement is above expectation in 2018 in Principles of Science, Computers, Resistant materials, Textiles, Drama, Music and Physical Education. Key Stage 5 achievement is 'effective' overall with aspects of 'very effective'.
- Assessment information is increasingly being used to identify gaps in learning and to plan specific interventions.
- Students review their assessments in a one to one conversation with their tutor in order to identify next steps in learning.
- The school is a major partner in the growing A-level collaboration with other schools.
- The school actively seeks partnership learning opportunities with associated primary schools.
- There is a highly effective Student Listening Service.

The validation team was unable to concur with several judgments made in the SSRE as there was insufficient evidence provided in the SSRE or in evidence files.

Conclusion

The SSRE requires improvement in order to help the school identify targets for improving learning or provision in the school improvement and development plans.

The school knows itself quite well based, to some extent, on observations and evidence

gathered during the validation visit rather than from evidence in the SSRE.