

Graham Reeves Ltd

for

The Isle of Man Department of Education, Sport and Culture

External Validation of the School Self-Review and Evaluation

Bunscoill Rhumsaa

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 Bunscoill Rhumsaa SSRE included a visit to the school on Tuesday 29th and Wednesday 30th January 2019. The visit was made by Graham Reeves. He worked alongside David Jenkins, headteacher, and Geoff Moorcroft, representing the DESC's Education Improvement Service.

Context

Bunscoill Rhumsaa is situated in the coastal town of Ramsey in the north of the Island. It was formed in 2013 with the merger of Auldyn infants and Ree Gorree juniors. The Auldyn and Ree Gorree buildings date from 2003 and 2008 respectively. They are on a split site and separated by a service road.

There are 513 pupils on roll, organised into 21 classes, making it the largest primary school on the Island. In addition, there are 17 pupils in the two classes of a PMLD (profound and multiple learning disabilities) unit.

There are 24.7 full-time equivalent teachers including the headteacher and two deputies. In addition, there are 24 classroom support staff, including 21 for children with special educational needs, and two clerical staff.

The catchment area of the school is a mix of privately owned, privately rented and local government housing.

18.7 per cent of pupils, including those in the unit, have been identified as having special educational needs. This is below the average for primary schools on the Island. 26 per cent receive free school meals. This is above the average for the Island. A small number of pupils are learning English as an additional language.

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

- **Achievement against Prior Attainment**
- **Management**
- **Curriculum**

Achievement against Prior Learning

The school judges this aspect as 'very effective'.

It was chosen for consideration in order to confirm that:

- Progress that had been made by pupils who completed the Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1, or Key Stage 2 in 2018 can be judged as 'very effective'.
- Within lessons and units of work, the large majority of pupils develop a 'love of learning' and make very good progress in their learning.
- Achievement against Prior Learning can be judged as 'very effective' overall.

Management

The school judges this aspect as 'very effective'.

It was chosen for consideration in order to confirm that:

- All appropriate policies are in place and reflected in day-to-day systems.
- Communications systems across school are good and all stakeholders are kept informed.
- Since introducing the new assessment process, the school has seen notable improvement in the progress of its pupils and, as a result, their attainment.
- Budget management at the school is good. Resources are allocated to school improvement priorities and are used appropriately.
- Management can be judged as 'very effective' overall.

Curriculum

The school judges this aspect as 'very effective'.

It was chosen for consideration in order to confirm that:

- All areas of the curriculum reflect the principles of the Essentials for Learning framework.
- Pupils experience a broad, varied curriculum which caters for all interests.
- The curriculum allows pupils to operate independently, applying their skills and understanding to a range of activities and problem-solving.
- The curriculum reflects the context and needs of the Isle of Man as well as the global community and provides opportunities for pupils to make a positive contribution to their community.
- Curriculum can be judged as 'very effective' overall.

The Validation Activities

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

- toured the school's two sites
- observed a total of 9 lessons
- observed lunchtime
- looked at a number of documents
- met with a group of teachers
- met with a group of support staff

- met with a group of pupils
- met with a group of governors
- met with a group of parents.

Findings

Summary

The school knows itself well and is therefore in a good position to continue to build on the improvement of recent years.

Achievement against Prior Learning

A large majority of pupils who completed the Foundation Stage in July 2018 had made five or more jumps of progress in all areas of learning. Achievement against Prior Learning is therefore 'inspirational' at this stage.

A large majority of pupils who completed Key Stage 1 in July 2018 had made three or more sub-levels of progress in all the core subjects during the course of the key stage. Achievement against Prior Learning is therefore 'very effective' at this stage.

Almost all pupils who completed Key Stage 2 in July 2018 had made six or more sub-levels of progress in Speaking and Listening during the course of the key stage. A large majority had made six or more sub-levels of progress in the other core subjects. Achievement against Prior Learning is therefore 'very effective' at this stage.

Teachers have records that show that most pupils make progress in lessons in Reading, Writing and Mathematics in Key Stages 1 and 2 and in the areas of learning in the Foundation Stage. The school as a whole does not systematically monitor and record such learning.

The validation team concurs with the school's judgment that Achievement against Prior Attainment is 'very effective' overall.

Management

The school has appropriate policies in place and these are largely reflected in day-to-day practice.

Communications systems across the school are very good and effective, and all stakeholders are kept informed.

After the last validation visit the school introduced a new assessment process, which is more consistent and systematic than the previous one. Since that change there has been a notable improvement in pupils' attainment and progress.

The school's budget management is good. It identifies resources required to meet the priorities identified in its improvement plan.

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

Curriculum

The curriculum reflects the principles of the Island's 'Essentials for Learning' framework.

Pupils experience a broad, varied curriculum which caters for all interests and which provides pupils with opportunities to apply their skills to a range of activities. It reflects the context and needs of the Isle of Man as well as the wider world, and provides opportunities for pupils to make a positive contribution to their community.

The validation team concurs with the school's judgment that Curriculum 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 set out in the SSRE. It concurred with many of these judgments, including:

- Pupils talk of school in positive terms, want to come to school They are keen to share ideas and to help improve the school.
- Behaviour at the school is very good.
- Leadership enthuses and inspires colleagues and supports their professional development.
- The school encourages professional self-evaluation and honesty.
- There is a strong culture of inclusion.
- The school has a strong sense of direction.
- Teaching for Learning is 'effective'.
- At the beginning of topics, pupils are able to pose their own 'key questions'.
- Pupil engagement in, and enjoyment of, their learning is high.
- The school is held in high regard by its stakeholders and makes a positive contribution to the community and the lives of families.
- Through the appointment of a child and family support worker the school has fostered good relationships with parents and families who have requested or been directed to support.
- The school has a profound impact on the behaviour and attitudes of its pupils.

Conclusion

For the most part, the SSRE is comprehensive and clearly set out. It mostly – but not always – follows the relevant grade descriptors. The literacy sections of the school improvement plan are explicitly concerned with attainment and have specific success criteria related to the improvement of pupils' learning. The school is aware that it should use this approach for those other parts of the plan which are currently more about provision than about learning improvement.

The school knows itself well and is therefore in a good position to continue to build on the improvement of recent years.

Graham Reeves
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