

Graham Reeves Ltd

for

The Isle of Man Department of Education, Sport and Culture

External Validation of the School Self-Review and Evaluation

Ballaugh 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 Ballaugh SSRE included a visit to the school on Thursday 31st January 2019. The visit was made by Graham Reeves. He worked alongside Graeme Cushnie, headteacher, and Karen Riordan, representing the DESC's Education Improvement Service.

Context

Ballaugh Primary School is situated in the North West of the island. Its catchment area is very large geographically, with the main settlement being Ballaugh village which is the only village in the parish. The catchment area mainly comprises owner-occupied housing with some local authority accommodation.

The building dates from 1873, with an extension having been built in 1996.

There are 68 pupils on the school roll, organised into three classes. There are 3.9 full time equivalent teachers, including the headteacher, and three part time members of the classroom support staff.

7.4% of the pupils are on the Special Educational Needs register. This is below the Island average. 20.6% of pupils receive free school meals. This is slightly below the Island average. There are no pupils 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

- **Personal Development**
- **Teaching for Learning**
- **Partnerships with Parent/Carers**

Personal Development

The school judges this aspect as 'very effective.'

It was chosen for consideration in order to confirm that:

- Learning dispositions are spoken about by children and staff in all classes, relating them to the current learning in an age-appropriate way.
- The large majority of pupils respect and value each other, showing empathy with their peers, feeling happy and safe at school.
- The large majority of pupils are growing up to have a strong sense of well-being, are self-aware and develop well, socially and emotionally.
- A large majority of pupils have high levels of literacy and enjoy reading a significantly wide range of literature.
- Personal Development can be judged as 'very effective' overall.

Teaching for Learning

The school judges this aspect as 'effective.'

It was chosen for consideration in order to confirm that:

- Most teaching staff promote and embed a Growth Mindset culture towards learning.
- Teaching staff show effective command of areas of learning and subject knowledge. They seek ways to improve their practice.
- In all classes the needs of learners are taken in to account and acted on to enable the very large majority of pupils to progress at, or above, expected levels.
- Creative teaching strategies are applied appropriately to improve the learning of pupils.
- Teaching for Learning can be judged as 'effective' overall.

Partnerships with Parents/Carers

The school judges this aspect as 'very effective.'

It was chosen for consideration in order to confirm that:

- Parents hold the school in high regard.
- The school regularly consults parents and carers annually as part of a consultation and improvement cycle.
- The school is very well placed to build on its links with parents, creating opportunities for them to become more involved with, and supportive of, the learning approaches that are used in school.
- Partnerships with Parents/Carers can be judged as 'very effective'.

The Validation Activities

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

- toured the school
- observed lessons in all three classes
- observed playtime and lunchtime
- looked at a number of documents
- met with a group of staff members

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

Findings

Summary

The school knows itself well and is therefore in a position to plan for further improvement.

Personal Development

Pupils are able to talk about the '6Rs' learning dispositions. The school recognises that it does not yet monitor acquisition of the 6Rs sufficiently well.

Pupils respect and value each other and show empathy towards their peers. They feel happy and safe at school. The large majority are growing up to have a strong sense of well-being. They are generally self-aware and develop well socially and emotionally.

A large majority of pupils have high levels of literacy and enjoy reading a significantly wide range of literature.

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

Teaching for Learning

All teaching staff teach pupils about developing a 'growth mindset'. This aspect of Teaching for Learning is still being developed in the school.

Teaching staff have a command of the areas of learning and of subject knowledge. They seek ways to improve their practice. They take the needs of learners into account through, for example, curriculum and lesson planning, differentiated support and – in some cases – the use of personalised targets. They apply creative teaching strategies appropriately to improve the learning of pupils. The school's approach to teaching for learning contributes to the large majority of pupils making progress at or above expected rates.

The validation team concurs with the school's judgment that Teaching for Learning is 'effective' overall.

Partnerships with Parents/Carers

The school is held in high regard by parents, pupils, governors and staff. It has a good reputation. It consults parents and carers annually as part of a consultation and improvement cycle.

The school is very well placed to build on its links with parents, and to create opportunities for them to become more involved with, and supportive of, the learning approaches that are used in school.

The validation team concurs with the school's judgment that Partnerships with Parents/Carers 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 concurred with many of these, including:

- A large majority of pupils are prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Almost all pupils who completed the Foundation Stage in July 2018 had made 5 or more jumps progress in at least 13 of the 17 areas of learning; all pupils who completed Key Stage 1 had made three or more sub-levels of progress over that stage; and all pupils who completed Key Stage 2 had made six or more sub-levels of progress. This means that Achievement against Prior Learning can be judged as 'very effective' at Foundation Stage, and as 'inspirational' at Key Stages 1 and 2.
- Moderation reports show that teachers' assessments are accurate.
- Assessment is used to track individual progress but there is not a consistent system used in all classes to inform future provision.
- Children are led to make connections with their prior learning.
- The curriculum takes into account the context of the Isle of Man.
- The school sends delegates to the annual Fairtrade Conference which focuses on the global context of the Isle of Man.
- The school advises pupils and families about the potential dangers of the online environment.
- Pupils are prepared for future challenges posed by change.

Conclusion

The SSRE is a thorough and clearly presented document with clear judgments, supported by examples of evidence. The judgments are mostly related to the relevant grade descriptors and are used to identify priorities articulated in the school improvement plan (SIP). The SIP refers to the impact on learning. This is good practice, which could be furthered by making such impact more specific in the success criteria.

The school knows itself well and is therefore in a position to plan for further improvement.

Graham Reeves
February 2019