

# External Validation 2019

## **Ramsey Grammar School Validation Report**

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 Ramsey Grammar School SSRE included a visit to the school on Wednesday 13 and Thursday 14 March 2019. The visit was made by Howard Marshall. He worked alongside Annette Baker, headteacher, and Geoff Moorcroft, Director of Education, and Jan Gimbert, representing the DESC's Education Improvement Service to look at;-

- Wider partnerships
- Achievement against Prior Attainment
- Teaching for Learning

### **Wider Partnerships**

The team agreed with the school's judgment that Wider Partnerships are 'very effective'. The school strategically plans work with other schools that improves the provision and outcomes for its pupils. The Key Stage 5 collaboration with two other secondary schools provides viability for less popular courses and courses for which there is limited or no staffing provision in the host school giving pupils a wider choice of subjects for study. Similarly, at Key Stage 4 the school's strategic liaison with University College Isle of Man (UCM) helps to provide a broad curriculum for pupils. Parents praised the school's primary to secondary transition arrangements. The school has a dedicated teacher and pupils are well prepared for their move to the school. The school has developed an extensive range of partnerships with agencies that improves provision for students, though there is less evidence in the SSRE to support the impact this.

### **Achievement against Prior Attainment**

The team agreed with the school's judgment that Achievement against Prior Attainment is 'not yet effective/improving'. Progress in English and mathematics at Key Stage 3 is 'very effective' when compared with the Island's average with a large majority of pupils making four or more sublevels of progress. Progress between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4 is 'not yet effective'. The school's tracking of pupil learning indicates that Key Stage 4 will improve in the 2019 examinations. The progress that pupils make in Key Stage 5 is impressive and correctly judged as 'very effective'.

The school has some evidence that, within lessons and units of work, most pupils have developed a 'love of learning' but there is less explicit evidence provided in the SSRE or held by leaders to support the degree to which students acquire and apply skills, knowledge and understanding within lessons and units of work.

### **Teaching for Learning**

From the validation team's discussions with pupils, teachers and leaders and from the results of the pupil survey it is evident that the school promotes and embeds a growth

mindset culture towards learning. Pupils are increasingly encouraged to embrace mistakes as part of their learning. The school has evidence to support its judgment that teaching staff show very effective command of areas of learning and subject knowledge. The validation team's visits to classrooms supports this judgment. Teachers are introducing new approaches to learning with the use of appropriate technology. Some exciting initiatives were shared with the validation team. The school is correct to identify developing greater pupil autonomy, metacognition and feedback as areas for further development. The sharing of learning outcomes also requires further attention. Assessment systems are used effectively to track progress and identify underachievement. After discussion, the validation team concurred with the school's judgment that Teaching for Learning 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. In particular, it concurred with many of these judgments, including:

- Most pupils are committed to and proud of the school
- The student council represents the views of the pupils
- Attainment is 'Not yet effective: improving' overall and 'very effective' in Key Stage 5
- The SSRE process is integrated into the review of team effectiveness
- Teachers are inspired and supported by leaders to engage in professional development and reflective practice supported by evidence-based research
- The school is committed to a culture of inclusion that is guided by the 'Way of Being'
- Communication systems are developing across the school so that more stakeholders feel informed and can engage more effectively
- Assessment systems are used to track pupil progress which is used to support learning
- At Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5 options are based on pupils' needs and choices

In addition, the validation team is pleased to note that the school is held in high regard by parents and staff and that behaviour is good.

### **Conclusion**

The SSRE is, in the main, evaluative and supported by appropriate evidence. There are sections where judgments, clearly made against the criteria, are not supported by sufficient evidence. The SSRE clearly informs the School Improvement Plan. The school knows itself well and is well placed to improve.