

## **Dhoon Primary School**

Dhoon School recently underwent an external validation, which involved confirming the judgments the school has made about itself in certain areas. For the purpose of this validation, the following aspects were looked at in detail:

- Assessment
- Learning and teaching
- Achievement against prior attainment.

### **Assessment**

The validation team concurred with the school's judgment that assessment is a 'significant strength'. The team noted that the school makes very good use of assessment processes and data to inform and improve pupils' learning. The principles of 'assessment for learning' are well established. Teachers' marking of pupils' work is very good, making clear reference to what has been successful and identifying next steps. The team felt that a particularly notable aspect of assessment in the school is the way in which pupils participate in the setting of targets for future learning. The team went on to note that the school has a wealth of data collected through summative assessment and uses pupil-tracking systems effectively to make evaluative judgments about pupils' progress.

### **Learning and teaching**

The validation team concurred with the school's judgment that learning and teaching at the school is 'good'. They noted that teachers provide pupils with a range of learning activities which provided them with opportunities to work both independently and collaboratively, and that pupils take appropriate opportunities to direct their own learning. The team also reported that learning is extended beyond the classroom effectively through, for example, participation in a range of educational visits, while also noting that the use of home learning journals has had a positive impact on pupils' engagement with learning at home. Additionally, the team commented that teachers' medium and short term planning is thorough and identifies clear learning objectives, outcomes and teaching strategies matched to pupils needs.

### **Achievement against prior attainment**

The validation team concurred with the school's judgment that pupils' achievement against prior attainment is 'good'. They noted that most pupils, throughout the school, make better than the Island's average progress, and that the current data tracking shows that most of the current cohort of pupils will make better than average progress in reading, writing and numeracy. The team additionally noted that within individual lessons and units of work, pupils acquire and apply skills, knowledge and understanding, demonstrating good progress in their learning.

### **Other areas considered**

As well as the three specific areas on which the team focused, it also considered other judgments set out in the SSRE document. In particular, the validation team noted that:

- Behaviour at the school is excellent.
- Pupils are polite, responsible and independent.

- Pupils recognise that they genuinely have a voice in determining the school's direction.
- The school's 'curriculum drivers' (Local Links, The Wider World, Communication, Initiative, The Arts) help teachers to plan and provide learning that is varied, accessible and engaging.
- The taught curriculum makes very good reference to the Manx context.
- Classroom environments are rich and engaging.
- The school provides guidance and support to pupils in relation to inclusion, healthy lifestyles, enjoyment and achievement, and citizenship.
- The school provides many opportunities for pupils to take part in sporting, musical and other events on the Island.
- The headteacher and senior staff promote a shared vision which provides the school with a sense of purpose.
- Teachers are encouraged to be innovative and risk-taking; the curriculum drivers and the child-led approach to planning, for example, allow teachers to be creative and to try new things in their classes.
- The headteacher distributes responsibility throughout the staff effectively, with leaders at all levels being accountable for school improvement.

### **Conclusion**

The school knows itself well. It is in a good position to devise clear and specific targets for the continued improvement of pupils' learning.

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Headteacher  
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