

Onchan Primary School

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

- Achievement against prior attainment
- Teaching and learning
- Assessment.

Achievement against prior attainment

Achievement against prior attainment is good. By the end of last school year most pupils in the Foundation Stage made progress in all areas of learning that was better than the Island average. The current cohort is predicted to make better than average progress. By the end of last school year most pupils at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 had made better than average progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Judging from observations and discussions, it is very likely that within lessons and units of work pupils acquire and apply skills, knowledge and understanding, demonstrating progress in their learning.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning is good. Teachers use a range of strategies to ensure all pupils are challenged. They make widespread use of 'chilli challenges' through which pupils make guided choices of 'mild', 'hot' or 'spicy' tasks. Pupils told the validation team that they found most of the work planned by teachers to be exciting. Teachers' planning identifies a wide range of learning activities including opportunities for individual, pair and group discussions. Teachers regularly evaluate pupils' learning and the next steps they need to take. They set realistic and challenging targets for the improvement of pupils' learning. Pupils know their targets and are often involved in setting them and monitoring their achievement.

Assessment

Assessment of pupils is good. The school has a clear policy which identifies the processes and methods used for recording pupil progress. The policy also deals with moderation and marking and is widely implemented. 'Assessment for learning' methodology is well developed with considerable use being made of self- and peer-assessment. Through newsletters, regular parents' evenings, annual reports and other means of contact, parents are well informed both about what children will be learning and about their attainment and progress. Teachers mark pupils' work thoroughly and often use marking to inform them of the next steps in learning. The school gathers a great deal of assessment data which is analysed carefully.

Other areas considered

As well as the specific aspects of the SSRE on which it focused, the validation team also considered other judgments set out in the SSRE. It concurred with a range of statements, including those that:

- The special education needs unit is an important and valued part of the school. Children from the unit are included in all aspects of school life where appropriate and pupils from other classes visit from time to time.
- Pupils are happy and confident.
- The school communicates well with parents. It has a strong reputation locally.

- The headteacher and senior team promote a clear, shared vision. School leadership is fair, transparent and energetic. Leadership is distributed to take account of areas of expertise and interest and to promote teamwork and collective ownership.
- Staff work well together to promote a nurturing atmosphere.
- Teachers make good use of 'learning walls' and 'teaching walls' in their classrooms.
- Pupils' learning is enhanced by visits locally and further afield and by visits from people able to share their particular expertise.
- Teachers of each year group plan thematically.
- Differentiated learning is evident throughout the school, particularly through the chilli challenges.
- The school provides a considerable number of extra-curricular clubs – some of them organised by pupils.
- Parents report that their children are aware of what they need to do to stay healthy and safe.

Conclusion

The school knows itself well and is therefore in a very good position to continue to improve. It has produced a detailed SSRE report. Even though the school building is old it is used flexibly as a positive learning environment and recent changes mean that the school could now judge the learning environment as 'good' and move toward it being a 'significant strength'.

Mrs Jo Richardson
Headteacher
July 2014