

Graham Reeves Ltd

for

The Isle of Man Department of Education, Sport and Culture

External Validation of the School Self-Review and Evaluation

Marown 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 Marown SSRE included a visit to the school on Thursday 25th January 2018. The visit was made by Graham Reeves. He worked alongside Ian Longshaw, headteacher, and Karen Riordan, representing the DESC's Education Improvement Service. Bridget Wilson, deputy headteacher, joined the team members while they were looking at documents.

Context

Marown School serves the catchment area of Glen Vine and Crosby villages and outlying rural areas to the north and south of the main Douglas to Peel Road. There is a mixture of private rental accommodation and owner-occupied properties with a small amount of local authority housing.

There are 192 pupils on roll. There are 9.2 full-time equivalent teachers, including the headteacher. In addition, there are three full-time and two part-time members of the classroom support staff.

There is a good deal of pupil mobility, and a small proportion of pupils attending the school now live out of the catchment area, having moved to other areas but still attending the school.

13.5 per cent of children are registered as having special education needs. This is lower than the Island average. 2.1 per cent receive free school meals. This is well below the Island average. Four per cent of children are learning English as an additional language. There are no 'looked-after' children.

The school opened on its current site in 1985, replacing an older building situated in a remote location. It was extended in 2001. There are eight classrooms, with craft area facilities shared between each pair of rooms. There is also a library as well as a centrally situated hall which serves as a gymnasium and dining room. There is a large playing field and three playgrounds.

Focus of the Validation

The validation of the SSRE covered the full range of the school's judgements but focused on three specific aspects. These were:

- **Personal Development**
- **Governance**
- **Teaching for Learning**

Personal Development

This aspect is judged by the school as 'very effective'. It was chosen for consideration in order to confirm that:

- Pupils are well behaved and show high levels of engagement
- The quality of relationships across the school is high with the vast majority of children being able to work co-operatively and collaboratively in a variety of group situations
- Most children have an enjoyment of reading and often read for pleasure
- Personal Development can be judged as 'very effective' overall.

Governance

This aspect is judged by the school as 'very effective'. It was chosen for consideration in order to confirm that:

- The governing body has an excellent grasp of school strengths and weaknesses through regular reports and updates by the headteacher
- The governors have helped develop the strategic direction of the school
- The governing body actively supports the headteacher and leadership team
- The governing body is prepared to make difficult decisions to support the direction of the school
- Governance can be judged as 'very effective' overall.

Teaching for Learning

This aspect is judged by the school as 'very effective'. It was chosen for consideration in order to confirm that:

- There is a good balance between the development of skills and the acquisition of knowledge
- In the majority of year groups there is a consistent use of quality next steps when marking, which show pupils what they need to do to improve further
- In the vast majority of year groups there is a culture of high aspirations and ambition
- ICT is used to extend and enrich learning
- Teaching for Learning can be judged as 'very effective' overall.

The Validation Activities

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

- toured the school
- observed lessons
- observed lunchtime
- looked at a number of documents
- talked with a group of staff members
- talked with a group of pupils
- talked with a group of parents
- talked with members of the Governing Body.

Findings

Summary

The school knows itself very well. It is therefore in an excellent position to continue planning for further improvement.

Personal Development

Pupils throughout the school behave well and show high levels of engagement in their learning activities. Pupils have good relationships with each other and with school staff. The vast majority are able to work co-operatively and collaboratively in a variety of group situations. Most children enjoy reading and often read for pleasure at home as well as at school

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

Governance

The governing body has an excellent grasp of school strengths and areas for development. It gains this through regular reports and updates from the headteacher and from their direct involvement in school activities. Governors have helped develop the strategic direction of the school. The governing body actively supports the headteacher and leadership team in a variety of ways. It has shown that it is prepared to make difficult decisions when necessary.

The validation team concurs with the school's judgement that Governance is 'very effective'.

Teaching for Learning

Teaching at the school involves a good balance between the development of skills and the acquisition of knowledge. Marking shows pupils the next steps they need to take to improve their learning. Throughout the school there is a culture of high aspirations and ambition. ICT is used to extend and enrich pupils' learning.

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

Other Areas Considered

As well as the three specific aspects of the SSRE on which it focused, the validation team also considered other judgements and statements set out in the SSRE. It concurred with many of these, including:

- Achievement against Prior Attainment is 'very effective' overall
- Senior leaders motivate other team members and actively encourage creative thinking and innovation that will help to develop the school
- The senior leadership promotes a vision where high aspirations are valued
- Staff are actively involved in the whole-school improvement process
- There are very good communication systems in the school
- The school reading records have encouraged a dialogue with parents to help improve children's reading skills
- The school is inclusive, very safe, and has a nurturing character that helps children to develop their full potential
- Members of the School Council work together with the headteacher to understand the school improvement plan and then write their own version from the perspective of children at the school
- Parents, pupils, governors and the wider community hold the school in high regard
- The school uses effective mechanisms to gather information from stakeholders
- The school has mechanisms for regular communications with parents and carers about their children's progress
- E-safety is a crucial part of the ICT curriculum.

Conclusion

The Marown SSRE is a very full and detailed document with judgements supported by plenty of evidence. These judgements are used to identify targets for the school improvement plan, which would benefit from separating out and emphasising those targets that are directly concerned with the improvement of pupils' learning.

The school knows itself very well. It is therefore in an excellent position to continue planning for further improvement.

Graham Reeves. February 2018