

Ballasalla Primary School

Ballasalla Primary School recently took part in an external validation of its school self-review and evaluation process which involved confirming the judgments the school made about itself across certain areas.

Three aspects were looked at in detail:

- Achievement against prior attainment
- Personal development
- Keeping safe
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Personal development

The validation team concurs with the school's judgment that Personal Development should be judged as 'effective' overall.

The school has good evidence from learning walks that most pupils demonstrate good levels of the 6Rs learning dispositions. The pupils informed us of the importance of the 6Rs and gave examples of how they use them in their learning. Pupils talked very positively about how the development of a 'growth mindset' was helping them to understand that challenge and failure are important to their learning. From our discussions with pupils it is apparent that the development of growth mindset has improved resilience around the school.

Achievement against prior attainment

The validation team concurs with the school's judgment that Achievement Against Prior Attainment should be judged as 'effective' overall.

Progress in the Foundation Stage is 'effective'. Achievement against prior attainment is 'very effective' in Key Stage 1 and in Key Stage 2. From the learning walks conducted by school leaders, the outcomes reached by pupils and from our visits to classrooms and discussions with pupils, it is clear that pupils acquire and apply skills, knowledge and understanding in their lessons. This is not explicitly referenced in the school's SSRE.

The school's monitoring indicates that most pupils enjoy learning. As the SSRE states 'there is not enough evidence that this is consistent across the school', leading to a judgment of 'effective' in this aspect rather than 'very effective'.

Keeping Safe

The validation team concurs with the school's judgment that Keeping Safe should be judged as 'effective' overall.

The school has strong evidence, which is supported by external audits and link adviser visits, that child protection procedures are in place and these are understood and implemented by staff when required.

During playtime the validation team observed pupils making and taking decisions based on their own ongoing assessment of risk. The playtime experience at the school is active, imaginative and full of real-life decision-making opportunities - risk assessment brought to life.

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 examples set out in the SSRE. It concurs with many of these, including:

- The headteacher has created a culture where staff feel safe to take risks and are motivated to engage in research to inform decisions
- The school's vision is articulated to the school community
- Staff are consulted regarding the School Improvement Planning process
- Staff take ownership for areas they are leading
- Communication in the school is effective
- All staff track pupil learning and interventions are put in place where necessary and impact is monitored
- A large majority of parents hold the school in high regard
- The majority of parents feel the school engages with parents to help their children learn
- The validation team did not agree with the school's judgment that Teaching for Learning is 'not yet effective'. In meetings and through the validation team's observations teaching for learning is 'effective' against the criteria. The school's view is overly cautious.

Conclusion

As the result of clear leadership and a dedicated and unified staff, Ballasalla Primary School has improved rapidly in a number of ways. The knowledge the school has is not always clearly expressed in the SSRE. As the school knows there are also aspects of SSRE that require further evaluative evidence in order for the school to strategically and systematically plan for continuous improvement. The school knows itself quite well.

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