

Graham Reeves Ltd

for

The Isle of Man Department of Education, Sport and Culture

External Validation of the School Self-Review and Evaluation

Anagh Coar Primary 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 Anagh Coar SSRE included a visit to the school on Friday 25 May 2018. The visit was made by Graham Reeves. He worked alongside Rob Coole, headteacher, and Karen Riordan, representing the DESC's Education Improvement Service.

Context

Anagh Coar Primary School is situated in the centre of the Anagh Coar estate on the outskirts of Douglas. The catchment area consists mostly of local authority housing, with some owner-occupied accommodation.

The school was opened in 1976. There are 122 pupils on roll. They are organised into six classes.

Forty-seven per cent of pupils qualify for free school meals. This is considerably higher than the Island average. Thirty per cent of pupils have been identified as having special educational needs. This is also above the Island average. No pupils are learning English as an additional language.

There are 7.1 full time equivalent teachers including the headteacher, and 10 members of the classroom support staff. Over recent years there has been a number of staff absences and changes.

Focus of the Validation

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

- **Achievement against Prior Attainment**
- **Teaching for Learning**
- **Partnerships with Parents and Carers**

Achievement against Prior Attainment

The school judges this aspect as 'effective'

It was chosen for consideration in order to confirm that:

- The progress made by the cohort of pupils who completed the Early Years Foundation Stage in 2017 should be judged as 'not yet effective'
- The progress made by the cohort of pupils who completed Key Stage 1 in 2017 should be judged as 'inspirational'
- The progress made by the cohort of pupils who completed Key Stage 2 in 2017 should be judged as 'effective'
- Within lessons and units of work, the large majority of pupils have developed a 'love of learning' and make very good progress in their learning
- Achievement against Prior Attainment should be judged as 'effective' overall.

Teaching for Learning

The school judges this aspect as 'effective'

It was chosen for consideration in order to confirm that:

- All teaching staff are now creating a Growth Mindset culture towards learning in their classrooms, but this will take a significant period of time to embed and have a real impact on all learners
- Pupils are given some opportunities to direct and reflect upon their own learning
- Learning is differentiated based on prior learning experiences through a strong culture of 'assessment for learning'
- Across the core subjects a large majority of children have a clear understanding of where they are at in their learning and what they may need to use to help them to get to the next stage
- Teaching for Learning should be judged as 'effective' overall.

Partnerships with Parents and Carers

The school judges this aspect as 'very effective'.

It was chosen for consideration in order to confirm that:

- Parents, pupils, governors, staff and the wider community hold the school in high regard and feel that it makes a positive contribution to the improvement of the community and the lives of families
- The school gathers and acts on feedback from families and the community and builds it into its improvement cycle for self-evaluation and improvement purposes
- The school builds positive partnerships with a large majority of parents and carers to support pupil learning and well-being
- Partnerships with Parents and Carers should be judged as 'very effective' overall.

The Validation Activities

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

- toured the school
- attended a 'celebration assembly'

- 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 and carers.

Findings

Summary

The school knows itself well and is therefore in a good position to continue its improvement.

Achievement against Prior Learning

According to available figures, the progress made by pupils who completed the Foundation Stage in 2017 should be judged as 'not yet effective'. This judgment is based on an unreliable baseline assessment made on their admission to school, and actual progress is likely to have been better than this.

According to available figures, the progress made over the key stage by pupils who completed Key Stage 1 in 2017 should be judged as 'inspirational'. This judgment is based on an unreliable assessment made at the start of Year 1, and actual progress is likely to have been less than this.

Progress made by pupils who completed Key Stage 2 in 2017 can be reliably judged as 'effective' over the course of the key stage.

The school is confident that its assessment of children entering and completing the Foundation Stage is now reliable. The progress made by pupils completing the Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 at the end of this school year is likely to have been at least 'effective'.

Within lessons and units of work a large majority of pupils develop a love of learning and make progress towards their individual targets.

The validation team concurs with the school's judgment that Achievement against Prior Attainment is 'effective'.

Teaching for Learning

All teachers create a 'growth mindset' culture towards learning. This is beginning to have an impact on pupils as learners.

There is a very strong culture of 'assessment for learning'. Learning is differentiated according to ability and prior attainment. Pupils reflect upon their own learning and are given some opportunities to direct that learning.

A large majority of pupils have a clear understanding of where they are in their learning in the core subjects. They know what they need to do to improve.

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

Partnerships with Parents and Carers

Parents, pupils, governors, staff and the wider community hold the school in high regard and feel that it makes a positive contribution to the improvement of the community and the lives of families.

The school gathers and acts on feedback from parents and builds it into its improvement cycle.

The school builds positive partnerships with a large majority of parents and carers to support pupil learning and well-being.

The validation team concurs with the school's judgment that Partnerships with Parents and Carers 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 judgments set out in the SSRE. It concurred with many of these judgments, including:

- School leaders clearly articulate the school's vision.
- Staff focus groups on higher order thinking skills and well-being are contributing to these aspects of school improvement.
- Annual assessment data is shared with staff.
- Leaders are committed to running an inclusive school.
- The school has developed positive arrangements with a number of outside agencies.
- Communication with stakeholders is good.
- The use of 'thinking maps' across the school is helping to develop a climate of enquiry.
- The curriculum takes into account the Manx context.
- A well-planned transition programme ensures that pupils experience a smooth and positive transition into secondary school.
- Safeguarding is integrated into the curriculum.
- Provision for pupils with complex social and emotional needs is effective and has enabled the successful integration of such pupils into mainstream education.
- The school promotes the importance of thinking about mental as well as a physical health.

Conclusion

The school knows itself well. It is therefore in a good position to continue its improvement.

The SSRE is well set-out, in line with the relevant grade descriptors. Throughout the SSRE there are good references to what needs to be done to improve provision and outcomes. These form the basis of the school improvement plan, which would benefit from being more specific about the intended impact of the various activities.

Graham Reeves
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