

# **Graham Reeves Ltd**

*for*

## **The Isle of Man Department of Education, Sport and Culture**

### **External Validation of the School Self-Review and Evaluation**

#### **Sulby 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 Sulby SSRE included a visit to the school on Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> January 2018 (postponed from Friday 8<sup>th</sup> December 2017, when all schools on the Island were closed because of snow). The visit was made by Graham Reeves. He worked alongside Martin Jackson, headteacher, and Caroline Savin, representing the DESC's Education Improvement Service.

#### **Context**

Sulby Primary School is situated in the village of Sulby in the northern part of the Isle of Man. It serves a large but relatively low-density catchment area in the Parish of Lezayre, with a mixture of owner-occupied properties and local authority housing. There are currently 153 pupils, organised into seven classes.

Twenty-one per cent of pupils are on the register of special educational needs. This is a little above the Island average. Six per cent receive free school meals. This is well below the Island average. A small number are learning English as an additional language. There are no 'looked after' children.

There are eight full-time equivalent teachers, including the headteacher, and 2.2 full-time equivalent Education Support Officers.

The school opened in 1879. It moved into its current premises, built on land donated by a local benefactor, in 1991. An extension was added in 2005. There have been further building alterations and refurbishments since then.

#### **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

- **Achievement against Prior Attainment**
- **Management**
- **Curriculum**

## **Achievement against Prior Attainment**

The school judges this aspect as 'very effective'.

It was chosen for consideration in order to confirm that:

- A large majority of pupils across the school make very good progress in their learning
- Progress across the Foundation Stage is at least very effective
- Progress at Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 is at least very effective
- Achievement against Prior Attainment can be judged as 'very effective' overall.

## **Management**

The school judges this aspect as 'very effective'.

It was chosen for consideration in order to confirm that:

- The school has clear systems, established routines and policies in place that are embedded in the culture of the school and inform good practice.
- All staff are well informed through excellent communication systems
- The school analyses the performance of every pupil and uses this information to plan individual support or introduce effective strategies
- Budget management is excellent, and resources allocated to improvement priorities are carefully monitored
- Management can be judged as 'very effective' overall.

## **Curriculum**

The school judges this aspect as 'very effective'.

It was chosen for consideration in order to confirm that:

- The curriculum reflects the context and needs of the Isle of Man and global community, and makes a positive contribution to society
- The curriculum is enhanced by a wide variety of trips, workshops and visits
- The school has an effective and consistent approach to curriculum planning
- The school monitors and reviews its provision and introduces new curriculum projects and innovations to improve the pupils' outcomes
- Curriculum 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 teachers
- talked with a group of pupils
- talked with a group of parents

# Findings

## Summary

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

## Achievement against Prior Attainment

A large majority of pupils across the school make very good progress in their learning.

Progress in the Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 is at least very effective. Of those pupils who completed the Foundation Stage at the end of the 2016-2017 school year, a large majority (96%) had made five or more steps in 13 strands of the Early Learning Goals. Of those who completed Key Stage 1 a very large majority had progressed by at least three sub-levels during the course of the key stage. Of those completing Key Stage 2, a large majority had progressed by at least six sub-levels.

*The validation team concurs with the school's judgement that Achievement against Prior Attainment is 'very effective' and judges that it is close to being 'inspirational'.*

## Management

The school has clear systems, established routines and policies. These are embedded in the culture of the school and inform good practice.

There are excellent communication systems that keep all staff well-informed.

The school analyses the performance of every pupil and uses this information to introduce effective strategies or plan individual support where it is needed. The validation team noted that the school has made admirable steps to develop a procedure to assess children's personal development through the '6Rs' learning dispositions.

The initiatives taken to maximise resources mean that aspects of budget planning are already 'inspirational'. The school has recognised that the next – challenging – step is to evaluate the extent to which planned expenditure has an impact on pupils' learning.

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

## Curriculum

The school's curriculum reflects the context and needs of the Isle of Man and global community and makes a positive contribution to society. It is enhanced by a wide variety of trips, workshops and visits.

The school has an effective and consistent approach to curriculum planning. It monitors and reviews its provision and introduces new curriculum projects and innovations to improve the pupils' outcomes. The validation team noted, in particular, the development of three initiatives – the Global Learning Programme, the Lieutenant Governor's Award, and Inspiring Initiatives – that appear to be having a very positive impact.

*The validation team concurs with the school's judgement that Curriculum 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:

- Almost all pupils are positive role models.
- Almost all pupils talk enthusiastically about all aspects of the school's provision.
- The quality of relationships across the school is high.
- Almost all pupils are ready for the next stage in their education.
- The headteacher and deputy have a clear vision for the school.
- School leaders enthuse and inspire colleagues.
- The school has embraced the 'growth mindset' culture and most older pupils are able to describe the attributes of a growth mindset.
- All pupils have the opportunity to work collaboratively and cooperatively on a variety of activities.
- The development of 'learning partners' has been a successful innovation in all classrooms.
- 'Learning intentions' are shared with the children.
- The school provides parents with detailed reports.
- Parents, pupils, governors, staff and the wider community hold the school in very high regard.
- The school council project supports all children to develop life skills and awareness, and to become creative, collaborative problem solvers. The validation team regard this project as a particular strength.
- High standards and expectations are evident in all areas of the school.
- The school is a warm and friendly place where staff genuinely care for all aspects of every child's development.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are excellent.
- The school's accommodation is attractive, functional and well-maintained. It provides a welcoming learning environment.

## Conclusion

The school recognises that its SSRE is at its best when it provides judgements that are clearly related to the grade descriptors. In identifying the targets in the school improvement plan it is rightly focusing more on the improvement of pupils' learning. The analysis of need which informed these targets, while clearly documented, is not yet incorporated into the new SSRE format.

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

Graham Reeves  
February 2018