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**Quality Assurance Department**

# **Report Summary of the External Review by the QAD**

**for**

**St Ignatius College  
Siggiewi Primary School**

**External Review carried out from  
7<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> November 2016**

**22<sup>nd</sup> December 2016**

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# Introduction

The external review carried out in your school focused on Educational Leadership and Management, Learning and Teaching, and School Ethos. The following are the main outcomes resulting from the evidence gathered through questionnaires, school documentation, interviews and observations.

## Educational Leadership and Management

### Standard 1.1

**How clear is the Head of School's vision for the school? How well is the Head of School collaborating with the rest of the Senior Management Team to foster and support a professional learning community?**

#### Areas of strength

- The head of school is aware of the main strengths and challenges and has a clear and shared vision for the school.
- The head of school adopts distributed leadership within and beyond the senior management team, fostering collaboration.
- The senior management team provides support to the teaching staff.
- The senior management team provides various opportunities for parents to learn how to support their child.
- The school has established strong ties with the community.

#### A way forward

The already strong curricular support provided to teachers by the SMT can be enhanced by including written formative feedback that supports, guides and informs teachers' progress. This formative feedback on the observation sheet will then be followed up during the second visit to ensure professional growth. These lesson observations should be extended to peripatetic staff. This would enable the SMT to obtain a more comprehensive picture of the quality of teaching and learning in their school and provide peripatetic staff with another professional learning opportunity.

The senior management team should ensure that when a class teacher is away he/she is replaced by a warranted teacher or a member of the senior management team and that during this time learners are purposefully engaged in learning.

### Standard 1.2

**How effective are the internal evaluation processes that inform school development planning? How well are the structure, content and format of the school development planning documentation facilitating effective implementation, monitoring and evaluation of targeted actions?**

#### Areas of strength

- The school conducts an effective internal review process with the participation of all stakeholders.

- The senior management team is a driving force in the monitoring process and the teaching staff is involved in the selection of priority development targets, writing, implementation and evaluation of action plans.
- The school development planning documentation has appropriate structure and content.
- SDP Action Plans are shared on the school website and discussed on the School Council to increase parental involvement.

### **A way forward**

The head of school should continue the practice of keeping a formal record of outcomes of senior management team meetings adopted this scholastic year. These records drive the implementation of decisions taken, increase accountability and contribute to the school's internal evaluation.

The writing and implementation of all action plans should target specific year groups, especially those concerning teaching and learning.

### **Standard 1.3**

**How well are appropriate structures and good human resources management ensuring effective school administration and consistency in all actions?**

#### **Areas of strength**

- The school has an effective internal and external communication system.
- School policies are shared with all stakeholders and are generally used effectively.
- The professional development sessions follow the priorities identified in the school development plan.
- The school invests in the necessary resources according to SDP action plans and other school needs.

### **A way forward**

Newly qualified teachers would further benefit from their induction process if they have opportunities to observe volunteer expert teachers. Such sharing of good practices is a valuable professional learning opportunity.

The school is encouraged to continue to work through the pupils' council to ensure that keeping a school clean is the responsibility of all. It should also ensure that toilet facilities are regularly cleaned throughout the day especially after breaks. This would sustain the welcoming environment of the school.

## **Learning and Teaching**

### **Standard 2.1**

**How well does the school curriculum satisfy learners' entitlement as outlined in the National Curriculum Framework?**

**The external review carried out in your school focused on Educational Leadership and Management, Learning and Teaching, and School Ethos. The**

**following are the main outcomes resulting from the evidence gathered through questionnaires, school documentation, interviews and observations.**

### **Areas of strength**

- Progression from the Kindergarten to the Primary years is based on consolidation and building upon the learners' experiences.
- The school is providing learners with opportunities to participate in various co-curricular activities where subjects are interlinked, thereby providing learners with a broad-based and well-balanced curriculum allowing for better retention and connection with the real world.

### **A way forward**

Teachers are encouraged to provide learners with more opportunities to widen digital literacy skills such as through the interactive use of the whiteboard and the effective use of class computers.

It is highly advisable that there is more monitoring when it comes to language use during lessons. The consistent use of English during particular lessons, with adequate room for mediation when necessary, has to be extended both in the teacher-learner and learner-learner exchanges.

### **Standard 2.2**

**Are learners experiencing successful learning in a positive environment? How well is the way teachers plan and deliver scaffolded lessons motivating learner involvement whatever their needs, abilities or learning preferences?**

### **Areas of strength**

- Schemes of work and medium-term plans are not only collected, but are actively used as a working document that sustains the school's priorities and action plans identified in the SDP.
- There is a positive relationship between the members of staff and learners, a fact which was confirmed by all the stakeholders. The working relationship between teacher/KA and LSA is also very healthy.

### **A way forward**

More use of pair and group work is encouraged, especially in the Kindergarten years, whereby the learners can gain skills in cooperative and collaborative learning.

Kindergarten assistants should move towards a more learner-centred approach and explore a variety of teaching and learning strategies to cater better for all learners.

It is highly recommended that learning intentions are shared with the learners and every lesson/learning session has an adequate lesson closure. This will provide the teacher/KA with the necessary feedback with regards to the learning intentions and whether these have been attained by all the learners in class and it leaves a lasting impression on learners reinforcing what they have learnt.

### **Standard 2.3**

**How well are the school's assessment policy and practices sustaining quality development at classroom and school levels, through both formative and summative assessment?**

#### **Areas of strength**

- The school has managed to lower the percentage of learners who are exempted from the benchmark exam, from 7% in 2015 to 3% in 2016 and still managed to score higher than the national mean for Mathematics and Maltese.

#### **A way forward**

It is highly advisable that learners are trained in higher-order thinking skills even at a young age. These skills should include using what they have learnt in a different context, thinking critically and evaluating new situations. This will also sustain the learners' move towards becoming lifelong learners through the promotion of the concept of learning to learn.

There should also be more awareness of the importance of formative comments in learners' written work. In that way, learners and parents would be able to better understand where learners need to improve in a particular topic.

Similar to the exercise done in the case of Mathematics, the school may consider conducting a trends analysis of examination results for English (and, possibly, Maltese), to analyse which components of listening, oral, reading or writing learners need to improve in.

## **School Ethos**

### **Standard 3.1**

**How well is the school supporting learners to reach their full potential?**

#### **Areas of strength**

- Learners' self-confidence and self-esteem are sustained through the various initiatives organized.
- The teaching staff and SMT are careful to identify learners who are struggling and provide them with the necessary support as early as possible.
- With the support of Complementary Education the school is taking the necessary action to raise literacy levels.
- The school is well supported by the services of an INCO, especially in carrying out conferences and establishing well formulated IEPs for learners concerned and supporting LSAs.

#### **A way forward**

The school should continue to work on the introduction of the pilot project which gives skills to parents on how to support their child attending Complementary support. Such programmes ensure continuity between school and home, sustaining learning.

The school should continue working with SpLD staff so teachers gain confidence and become conversant in the use of dyslexia friendly strategies in the classroom which provide learners with skills to become better at learning.

## **Standard 3.2**

**How much does a sense of mutual respect amongst all stakeholders, which promotes positive behaviour and fosters a sense of belonging, prevail in the school?**

### **Areas of strength**

- The senior management team is promoting a culture of mutual respect amongst all stakeholders in the school.
- Nearly all stakeholders are happy with the school and would recommend it as a workplace to others.
- Nearly all learners think their school is a good school.

### **A way forward**

The school should keep promoting a sense of mutual respect and good behaviour in the school by continuing to implement the action plan Promoting Good Behaviour. In choosing this priority target the school showed its sensitivity towards learners' perceptions even when these do not tally with those of adults. Such approach strengthens the sense of respect in the school.

## **Standard 3.3**

**How much do parents take an active part in the life of the school?**

### **Areas of strength**

- Participation of parents in their child's education and their interest in school life.
- Parent representatives on the School Council and volunteers support the school for the benefit of all learners.

### **A way forward**

The head of school may use the school website to keep parents updated on outcomes of School Council meetings. The school is encouraged to explore different ways through which parents become better acquainted with functions of the School Council and its members.

## Recommendations

*Taking into account the external review's findings, these recommendations represent the development areas the school needs to prioritise in the post-review action plan.*

- The already strong curricular support provided to teachers by the senior management team can be enhanced through including written formative feedback that supports, guides and informs teachers' progress. This formative feedback on the observation sheet will then be followed up during the second visit to ensure professional growth. These lesson observations should be extended to peripatetic staff.
- As part of the data gathering exercise informing the prioritisation of school development targets, the senior management team is encouraged to conduct a trends analysis of examination results for English (and, possibly, Maltese). The writing and implementation of all action plans should target specific year groups, especially those concerning teaching and learning.
- It is highly advisable that there is more monitoring when it comes to language use during lessons. The consistent use of English during particular lessons, with adequate room for mediation when necessary, has to be extended both in the teacher-learner and learner-learner exchanges.
- Teachers/KAs should continue to put effort in developing lessons where learners are encouraged to use digital resources interactively and are given opportunities to work cooperatively and collaboratively in groups or pairs.
- Teachers are encouraged to refine strategies which allow them to better assess learners' level of understanding and to check if learning intentions have been reached: these include questioning techniques that involve higher-order thinking skills, ending a lesson with an adequate lesson closure and writing formative comments on learners' written work.
- The school is encouraged to continue working on the very valid projects they embarked on, namely, becoming a Dyslexia Friendly school and providing parents of Complementary Education learners with the necessary training to better support their child at home.

### Next external review

The next external review will take place on completion of this cycle of External Reviews. This may be reconsidered as a result of the follow-up visit as per Parameters of the External Review available at: <http://education.gov.mt/en/education/quality-assurance/Pages/External-Reviews.aspx>

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