

EDUCATION, SPORT AND CULTURE

The Hon. Member for Ramsey, Mr Hooper, to ask The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

What areas of growth were identified in the external validation of Ballakermeen High School and what support the Department is providing to help achieve these aims.

Question W-202501-1442 published on 04 02 2025; Answer published on 18 02 2025

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture (Mrs Caine):

The purpose of the external validation process is to support the on-going school and educational service improvement process, ensuring that the focus remains on continuous growth and development. The process supports schools and educational services to evaluate the impact of their own provision, build the knowledge and expertise of all staff, ensuring that the Isle of Man's education system provides and delivers consistent, highly effective practice that ensures the best outcomes are achieved for all learners.

Disclosure of this information provided to the school or educational service would hinder the open, professional dialogue between schools, educational services, the Department and Etio who the Department currently have the contract with to deliver the three-year cycle of external validation visits. Therefore, this could harm and disrupt Etio's ability to continue validating schools and educational services. It could also prejudice the implementation of growth priorities, which schools and educational services need the time and opportunity to fully consider, implement, test and refine recommendations away from public scrutiny to ensure efficient and effective development.

Additionally, disclosure would hinder ongoing monitoring and improvement by shifting the focus back to the validation process instead of moving forward with growth and development.

It should be noted that the information published following the external validation visit includes the key findings, themes, any areas of growth, and detail of the information provided to the school or educational service.

The parent information for Ballakermeen High School can be found on the school's website below:

<https://bhs.sch.im/blog/index/view/id/447/External%20Validation>

The published information does not include personal data and is provided in such a way to provide clarity in a language that is appropriate and accessible, so not to be misinterpreted.

Information provided to the school or educational service following an external validation visit is designed to inform the preparation of subsequent development plans and will include personal data.

The external validation process should enable the external validation team to accurately assess the self-evaluation judgments of schools or educational services against the quality assurance framework, and to support ongoing, well-informed improvements without fear of public or institutional interference.

The Department is of course keen to understand the themes which have been identified during the external validation process, whether that be areas of strength or areas for growth and development.

The Department will be publishing an annual overview compiled by Etio, which will provide an analysis of the themes, a compelling narrative around the priorities emerging and highlight key considerations. By acknowledging these areas, a foundation can then be created with constructive dialogue and targeted interventions into schools and educational services, that will enhance learner outcomes and continue to establish a self-improving education system.

On understanding areas of growth and development, the Department will provide focused growth support, which will enable the provision of additional or focused support for a school or educational service to ensure the capacity for future improvement.

The Department has many development opportunities which are available across the organisation, these include raising attainment with wellbeing programme, coaching for both groups and individuals, and quality assurance workshops for all staff.

The Department has also initiated over the last couple of years the leadership development programme for both senior and middle leaders across our organisation, which are being led by serving leaders. The Department offers modules for senior leaders which include school improvement and implementation, ethical principles and leadership behaviours, development culture and ethos, leading learning and evaluating school effectiveness. For middle leaders the Department offer modules on importance of school leadership, the role of the subject leader in managing change and securing high quality learning, leading curriculum, learning and teaching, team building and change management and leading teacher development.