



Dear Parents and Carers,

An external validation visit was undertaken at Arbory School on the 12th May as part of a programme of external validation visits of schools and educational services commissioned by the Isle of Man Department of Education, Sport and Culture (DESC). The aim of the external validation visit was to promote continuous improvement and to deliver consistency, share best practice and deliver positive outcomes for children and young people. The visit was undertaken by two independent external validators from Etio (formerly known as Tribal Education).

The external validation team looked at a wide range of evidence presented by school leaders, including the school self-evaluation, and sampled the work of the school during the visit. These activities were focussed on key areas based on the self-evaluation of the school and included visits to a cross-section of lessons, meetings with staff, Governors and learners, gathering the views of parents and carers where appropriate and scrutiny of documentation.

During the visit, the external validation team considered key areas of focus which were explored in collaboration with the school leaders to validate school leaders' own evaluations.

This is a school which places community at the absolute core of its purpose.

Manx life and culture are proudly celebrated and integrated into your children's experiences both within and beyond the classroom, where learners have wide and varied opportunities to make rich and distinctive contributions across the Island. This is recognised and highly valued by both parents, carers and other community partners. Most locally, this is reflected in Laa Columb Killey, where your children play a major role in the celebrations, and recently the Manx Music Festival. Your children relish these and other opportunities they are given to take on roles of leadership and responsibility. These include those within the very active and energetic School Council learner led clubs such as chess and as 'Keepers' of the 'Cabinet of Curiosity,' the latter providing a wonderfully creative and stimulating learning opportunity. As one young person so beautifully put it, 'we enjoy the freedom of creativity here.'

Respectful relationships between every member of the school community creates a culture of care and nurture in which your children can grow as rounded young people who demonstrate consideration and kindness towards one another. Indeed, they learn, work and play together within a purposeful learning environment which has the atmosphere and feel of a close-knit and mutually supportive village school. As a result, your children proudly articulate and demonstrate the values which underpin the life of the school.

All staff play a shared role in the development of this positive culture where school leaders and teachers are responsive to evaluation and improvement. In this context they model the focus of growth mindset which is also a key feature of your children's experience and personal development. An engaged and informed Governing Body equally values the contribution it makes to supporting the school moving forward. The dedicated support staff team play a positive, proactive and valued role in developing the nurturing culture which helps all your



children to learn and grow supportively together. This collective approach is valued and recognised by parents who comment on the positive impact it has on their children's lives.

Leaders also have a clear understanding of the school in terms of both its existing and distinctive strengths and priorities for further growth which is reflected in their self-evaluation and improvement priorities. As part of this approach, the school are working to build on the strength of existing teaching practice to share varied approaches to learning that will further unleash your children's independence and their ability to take more responsibility for their thinking and choices as they move through the school.

This is linked to the development of the progressive and integrated use of technology for all year groups and consistent assessment process across all subjects which will help inform your children's understanding and application of the skills required for the next steps in their learning from the end of Foundation Stage as they move through every year group.

The areas of growth identified above, as part of the external validation visit are being reviewed and actioned by the school as part of a continuous cycle of self-evaluation.

Kind regards

Nicola Morris

Lead Validator

External Validation Team