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Quality Assurance Department

Report of the External Review by the QAD

for

**Maria Regina College
Naxxar Primary School**

**External Review carried out from
19th to 23rd February 2018**

26th March 2018

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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

Areas of strength

- The Head of School (HoS) has a clear vision for the school. He demonstrates commitment and dedication to the ongoing development of the school and seeks to continuously develop a positive relationship with different stakeholders of the school community.
- The senior management team (SMT) involves themselves in the daily life of both learners and teaching staff.
- A strong sense of belonging and collegiality prevails at school.
- The SMT has established effective and structured internal quality assurance mechanisms with the aim of supporting teachers in the implementation of the school's development plan (SDP) action plans.
- The school carries out extensive annual internal evaluation exercises with all the major stakeholders by using various tools to gather data.
- Reviewers noted that planning for school improvement is a core element of the school's culture.
- The school has established strong ties with the community and over the years members of staff have organized a number of activities with the Local Council.

A way forward

In their efforts to overcome the challenges currently faced by the school, the senior management team (SMT) and the teaching staff are encouraged to maintain and sustain their internal review mechanisms as well as keep prioritising learning and teaching in the school' development planning.

The SMT is to extend formal observations to peripatetic staff as this would provide the SMT with a more comprehensive picture of the quality of learning and teaching as well as provide these members of staff with the opportunity to grow professionally.

The school is encouraged to invest further in the sharing of good practices across year groups as this would help strengthen interpersonal relations, decrease dependence on external support, inform personal teacher development and continue to build on the knowledge and practice of all teaching staff.

Learning and Teaching

Areas of strength

- The excellent relationship noticed between teachers and learners supports a positive classroom management and enhances meaningful interaction with and among learners.

- Classroom teams are engaged in a positive and professional dialogue. They work well together for the benefit of all learners.

A way forward

The SMT and teachers are to revise timetables to provide learners with the entitled time for Science. The SMT is encouraged to identify the needs of the teachers when it comes to the teaching of Science so that they provide opportunities for professional development in this area.

The SMT is to keep on working on familiarizing teachers with formative assessment strategies and the sharing of good practice. Eventually, the next step would be to evaluate assessment practices and formulate a comprehensive assessment policy that encompasses the needs of the school. The policy should make reference to formative assessment and how different assessment strategies can be used in the classroom to enhance learning. The policy needs a period of time to be piloted and for consultation with different stakeholders.

The SMT in collaboration with the teaching staff is to evaluate the current reporting practices and analyse their effectiveness.

The school is encouraged to consult with experts who can guide and support the school in the development of a language framework for use in class. This should be followed by a consultation with the teaching staff so as to establish clear procedures of language use for the whole school.

The school is to further its efforts with the aim of formulating a strategic plan to address the issue of learner performance in national examinations.

School Ethos

Areas of strength

- A strong sense of pride in belonging to the school prevails amongst all stakeholders.
- The school offers various initiatives and organises several activities which enable all learners to grow in their self-esteem and self-confidence.
- The school has a strong support structure to identify and address learners' diverse needs.
- The school's communication system with parents is very effective.
- Parents respond very well to the various efforts of the school to promote their role in the education of their children.
- The School Council participates directly in the educational experiences at school.

A way forward

The school is encouraged to discuss the setting up of an EkoSkola Committee. This will develop the learners' awareness and understanding of sustainable development and further promote learners' life skills.

The SMT and teaching staff are to consider developing a whole-school approach to address the educational needs of talented learners, starting with the sharing of good practices already existing in the school.

While the school should maintain the procedures already in place to ensure good behaviour, it is encouraged to consult the different stakeholders to engage in the drafting of a whole school

behaviour policy which would build on what is currently in place and working well. This will help to increase the stakeholders' ownership of the rules and regulations and ensure uniformity and consistency in their implementation. It will also establish ways of identifying and rewarding positive behaviour.

The school council is encouraged to maximise communication with parents. The school in collaboration with the school council is to explore ways in how this may be achieved and come up with a number of initiatives to address this effectively.

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 SMT is to extend the good practice of formal observations to peripatetic staff.
- The school is encouraged to consult with experts who can guide and support the school in the development of a language framework for use in class. This should be followed by a consultation with the teaching staff so as to establish clear procedures of language use for the whole school.
- The SMT in collaboration with teachers are to revise timetables to provide learners with the entitled time for Science.
- The SMT is to keep on working on familiarizing teachers with formative assessment strategies and the sharing of good practice. Eventually, the next step would be to evaluate assessment practices and formulate a comprehensive assessment policy that encompasses the needs of the school. The policy should make reference to formative assessment and how different assessment strategies can be used in the classroom to enhance learning.
- The school is to further its efforts with the aim of formulating a strategic plan to address the issue of learner performance in national examinations.
- The SMT and teaching staff are to consider developing a whole-school approach to address the educational needs of talented learners, starting with the sharing of good practices already existing in the school.

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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