

QUALITY DEVELOPMENT SCHOOL REVIEW

NEWCRAIGHALL PRIMARY SCHOOL

AUGUST 2005

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EDUCATION SERVICES

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THE SCHOOL IN CONTEXT

Newcraighall Primary School is a non denominational primary school built in 1906 which serves the area of north east Edinburgh. The catchment area serves the village of Newcraighall and surrounding area.

Newcraighall Primary School has seven classrooms. The school building also includes a medical room, a gym/dining hall, an open communal area including a library, and a resource room/support for learning room. The school grounds have a tarmac play area, a nursery play area which includes soft top and grassy area and the school garden is to the front of the building.

The current school roll is 155. There are seven classes in the school, organised as follows:

Nursery Class			
AM	PM	P1	P2
20	10	18	17
P3	P4/5	P5/6	P6/7
16	25	24	25
	(18/7)	(12/12)	(8/17)

Twelve district pupils enrolled in P1 in August 2004 and four district pupils enrolled elsewhere. There were also six non-district pupils enrolled in P1.

Absence rates for 2003/2004 was 16 half days per pupil. This compares with authority and national averages of 18. There were no formal exclusions during the same period.

The teaching staff in 2004/2005 was:

Basic Complement	PA/SfL*
7.0 FTE**	0.32 FTE
Visiting Specialist(s)	Absence Cover
0.18 FTE	0.19 FTE

*Positive action/support for learning

**Full time equivalent

The headteacher (HT) has no teaching commitment and there is one principal teacher (PT). There is a visiting teacher for physical education (PE).

The pupil teacher ratio is 20:1. In addition, seven support staff are allocated to a range of whole-school responsibilities.

The HT and all members of the teaching staff have entered the professional review scheme. The support staff will have entered the staff development and review scheme by June 2005.

The pupil unit cost for 2003/2004 was £3304, compared to authority and national averages of £3823 and £3537 respectively. There is a School Board and school association.

PUPIL ATTAINMENT

National testing in reading, writing and mathematics is fully established at all stages. The school's current performance in relation to national 5-14 attainment targets is:

	'00	'01	'02	'03	'04	'05*
Reading	86%	67%	82%	77%	80%	80%
Writing	73%	48%	49%	46%	57%	63%
Mathematics	73%	62%	70%	69%	80%	74%

* 2005 target

Three pupils, two of whom have a Record of Needs, have been referred to psychological services.

THE SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The current school development plan covers the period 2004-2005 and targets the following main priorities:

- ❖ to further develop the school policy on learning and teaching;
- ❖ to improve and develop record keeping and to streamline planning formats;

- ✿ to develop programmes for technology and the social subjects;
- ✿ to raise pupil attainment in writing;
- ✿ to raise awareness of and further develop skills in formative assessment;
- ✿ to develop the music curriculum;
- ✿ to finalise the school policy on PE; and
- ✿ to develop the school policy on equal opportunities.

The review programme based on the standards and quality (S&Q) report comprised two key areas:

- ✿ learning and teaching;
- ✿ management, leadership and quality assurance;

plus the authority theme:

- ✿ continuity and progression in learning including transitions.

REVIEW PROCEDURES

Newcraighall Primary School was reviewed by a team from the Quality Services and Education Support Services Groups of the Education Department during March 2005. The review was based on the school's own S&Q report for session 2003-2004. This was considered by the team to be of a good quality and to form an acceptable basis for review.

The review team considered statements made by the school about two key areas in the S&Q report, along with the authority theme, and made their evaluation on the basis of evidence provided by the school and their own observations. The results of their findings are given below as a commentary on the school's report.

In order to make their evaluation, the team consulted a number of school documents, including the school development plan, interviewed samples of pupils, staff and parents, and observed learning and teaching. In total,

17 lessons were observed. A questionnaire was issued to a sample of parents.

One hundred questionnaires were sent to parents of pupils in the primary school and 15 were returned.

Twenty seven questionnaires were sent to parents of pupils in the nursery and seven were returned.

PARENTS' VIEWS

Almost all parents said that:

- ✿ their child enjoyed being at the school;
- ✿ their child found the activities stimulating and challenging;
- ✿ their child was encouraged to work to the best of his/her ability;
- ✿ they felt the teacher really knew their child as an individual;
- ✿ their child was treated fairly by his/her teachers;
- ✿ they were content with the part they were asked to play in their child's education;
- ✿ pupils were generally well behaved; and
- ✿ the school had good materials and equipment for learning and teaching.

Most parents said that:

- ✿ they knew if their child was having difficulty he/she would be helped;
- ✿ the school had explained what part they could play in their child's education;
- ✿ teachers dealt effectively with bad behaviour; and
- ✿ the school was well led.

FINDINGS OF THE REVIEW

1 LEARNING AND TEACHING

The review team agreed with the following statements from the school's S&Q report:

- ✿ Teachers' planning is good, with some aspects very good and a variety of learning opportunities are planned for.

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- ✿ There are regular opportunities for joint planning with learning support, PE and music teachers.
- ✿ A good variety of lessons are shared with pupils and there are clear explanations, expositions and instructions.
- ✿ Contexts for learning usually reflect pupil interests, previous experience and development needs.
- ✿ Activities in most curricular areas and in most classes are well differentiated.
- ✿ There are good opportunities for peer assessment, self assessment and evaluation with and by pupils.

Overall, learning and teaching was judged to be good.

Strengths in learning and teaching

Teachers' planning was thorough and reflective and, in most cases, took good account of meeting individual pupils' needs. There were some examples of very good planning, notably between class teachers and the PE specialist, where evaluation and next steps were integral to the planning process. Regular opportunities were available for joint planning with support for learning where appropriate.

Pupils experienced a wide variety of learning opportunities within whole class, group and individual settings. Different learning styles were regularly accommodated within the activities and tasks undertaken.

In most cases, teachers shared the learning outcomes of the lesson with the pupils, and reinforced this by referring repeatedly to the outcomes in the course of the lesson. Most pupils had a clear understanding of what was expected. Some pupils were able to take responsibility for their own learning, particularly in English language.

Pupils' interests were developed well through the individualised reading skills programme,

supported by the HT's reading for pleasure scheme. P1 and P2 pupils were successfully paired with older buddies in P5, P6 and P7 to further develop reading skills.

Activities in most curricular areas and in most classes were well planned to allow for differentiation by ability, by task, by skill, or by pace.

Pupils were encouraged to support each other and to evaluate their own work and that of their peers. Most pupils were well motivated and engaged well in the learning activities.

Areas for development in learning and teaching

The learning and teaching position statement should now be formalised as an agreed learning and teaching policy, with a view to being applied consistently across the school. Particular emphasis should be placed on the structure of each lesson, so that all teachers follow the pattern of sharing learning outcomes and, at the end of the lesson, reviewing with pupils what has been learned.

A common format for forward planning should be developed to ensure that teachers' evaluations incorporate next steps for learning. Continuity and progression should be expressed clearly within these plans.

Pace and challenge should be considered carefully when reflecting pupils' development needs.

2 MANAGEMENT, LEADERSHIP AND QUALITY ASSURANCE

The review team agreed with the following statements from the school's S&Q report:

- ✿ Teaching staff regularly and systematically evaluate their work.
- ✿ The HT regularly monitors teachers' plans, giving both written and verbal feedback.

- ✿ Systematic evaluation of pupil work in mathematics was carried out by the HT and PT and written feedback provided to each teacher on breadth and balance, differentiation, progression and feedback to pupils.
- ✿ The appointment of a PT had a very positive affect on the school and during the course of the session she ably supported and led a number of initiatives.
- ✿ A group of staff were involved in an audit of learning and teaching within the school and produced a draft policy.

Overall, management, leadership and quality assurance was judged to be good.

Strengths in management, leadership and quality assurance

The HT regularly reviewed teachers' forward plans, with the help of the PT. Each class teacher was offered both a liaison planning meeting and written feedback on a termly basis. Written feedback was full and comprehensive, and related directly to meeting individual pupils' needs. Commendably, a termly evaluation of the evidence supporting each forward plan was shared with the class teacher. The HT met regularly with staff in the nursery to review progress.

The HT and PT took a closer look at pupils' work in mathematics as part of the monitoring and self-evaluation programme. This evaluation was based on clearly agreed criteria which were applied consistently across all stages. Written feedback was comprehensive, and informed future planning and resourcing in mathematics.

The learning and teaching position statement was produced by a small working group following full consultation with staff. The statement took account of local and national guidelines and reflected, in particular, common principles and strategies agreed within the cluster policy on learning and teaching.

The PT had effectively led and supported a number of curricular and learning and teaching initiatives. All teaching staff had had the opportunity to be involved in working parties to develop initiatives identified in the development plan. These initiatives have had a positive impact on the work of the school.

Teaching and non-teaching staff felt well supported by both the HT and the PT, who provided clear direction and commitment to improving the school. Remits had been stretched due to long-term staff absence.

Areas for development in management, leadership and quality assurance

The school should continue to audit and update curricular policies within a rolling programme, as planned.

The programme for monitoring pupils' work should be extended to include further opportunities for sharing classroom experience based on agreed criteria.

The nursery should now develop self-evaluation procedures in line with authority guidelines.

3 CONTINUITY AND PROGRESSION IN LEARNING INCLUDING TRANSITIONS

The review team agreed with the following statements from the school's S&Q report:

- ✿ National Assessments are monitored through the use of a database and individual progress discussed between class teachers, learning support teacher and the HT.
- ✿ Individual pupil progress is tracked and information shared with staff.
- ✿ Links with local authority, other schools, agencies and employers are a strength of the school.

Overall, continuity and progression in learning including transitions was judged to be good.

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Strengths in continuity and progression in learning including transitions

A thorough and well-planned programme was in place for transition between nursery and P1.

There were very good opportunities for both formal and informal exchange of information. Attractive folios of children's work, photographs and observations were compiled for parents prior to children moving into the primary school. A very good buddy system, ongoing throughout the year, supported continuity, progression and transition at this stage and beyond.

Strong curricular links existed between the primary school and the local secondary school in a variety of subject areas. P7 pupils benefited from various opportunities to visit their secondary school. Pupils from P4–P7 enjoyed their learning experience in French, which followed the well-structured cluster programme. All pupils from P2–P7 participated in the very successful cluster PE events. The innovative and inclusive approach to the cluster PE programme was recognised at the recent Standard Life Attainment Awards ceremony where it won the Director's award.

The HT kept a careful record of individual pupil progress. Predictions were discussed with class teachers and with the support for learning teacher at key points throughout the year. National assessments were administered when pupils were ready for each level, and assessments were cross marked and moderated to ensure consistency.

The HT had a high profile within the cluster, and teaching staff were active participants in cluster working groups.

Helpful guides were issued to parents to support pupils' learning at home, and to encourage parents to become more involved in their children's learning.

Curricular records were updated termly to ensure appropriate progression for pupils in composite classes.

Areas for development in continuity and progression in learning including transitions

Earlier opportunities within the school year should be planned for consultation with parents about their child's progress, particularly for parents of children in P1. Parents also expressed a desire for more advice on how they could support their child with reading.

Tighter planning and record keeping should be developed so that the use of flexibility within the curriculum can be monitored more closely.

Transition arrangements should be consolidated between the primary school and all pre-5 centres.

Summative written reports for three year olds should be completed and shared with parents at the end of the school year.

SUMMARY**Commendable features**

- ✿ The welcoming atmosphere in the school.
- ✿ The inclusive cluster events, especially in PE.
- ✿ The pupils' sense of pride in their school.
- ✿ The celebration of success at Wonderful Work assemblies.
- ✿ The quality of teacher/pupil interaction.

Areas for development by the school

- ✿ The school should review and update its learning and teaching policy statement. This should become firmly embedded and be consistently applied by all staff.
- ✿ The process of self evaluation should be extended to include regular opportunities to share classroom experience. The exchange of good practice throughout the school should be promoted.

- ✿ A systematic whole school approach to forward planning and record keeping should be established to ensure continuity and progression within the curriculum. Next steps in learning should be clearly stated on a daily, termly and yearly basis so that pupils' progress is maintained from one year to the next.

CONCLUSION

The school's self-evaluation, as represented in its S&Q report, was considered to be mostly well-judged. Overall, the school's S&Q report is a good reflection of the current development position.

Areas for development by the authority

- ✿ Areas of good practice identified in this report should be entered on the database of good practice.
- ✿ The school should now be supported in the preparation of an action plan to address the main recommendations in this report.

Very good:	Major Strengths
Good:	Strengths outweigh weaknesses
Fair:	Some important weaknesses
Unsatisfactory:	Major weaknesses
Almost all:	90% plus
Most:	75% plus
Majority:	50% plus
Some:	15% plus
Few:	Less than 15%

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