



QUALITY DEVELOPMENT SCHOOL REVIEW

# BONNINGTON PRIMARY SCHOOL

SEPTEMBER 2006

◆ EDINBURGH ◆  
THE CITY OF EDINBURGH COUNCIL

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

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## THE SCHOOL IN CONTEXT

Bonnington Primary School is a non-denominational primary school built in 1879 which serves the area of north Edinburgh. The catchment area comprises significant areas of owner rented accommodation with some areas of multiple deprivation.

Bonnington Primary School has nine classrooms. The school building also includes a computer suite, a library, a music room, an art room, a drama/television room, a support for learning base and a learning assistant base. The school grounds have an early years playground, a nursery play area and an upper school playground.

The current school roll is 163. There are nine classes in the school.

Sixteen district pupils enrolled in P1 in August 2005 and 15 district pupils enrolled elsewhere. There were also four non-district pupils and one late enrolment in P1.

The absence rate for 2004–2005 was 32 half days per pupil. This compares with authority and national averages of 20 and 19 respectively. There were two formal exclusions during the period.

The headteacher (HT) is supported by the deputy headteacher (DHT). There are visiting teachers for drama, music, physical education (PE), swimming, French, English as an Additional Language, strings and brass.

The pupil teacher ratio is 19:1. In addition, 13 support staff are allocated to a range of whole-school responsibilities.

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

The budgeted pupil unit cost for 2005–2006 was £3767, compared to authority and national averages of £3024 and £3085 respectively. There is a School Board and parent staff association (PSA).

## 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:

	2003	2004	2005	2005 target
Reading	74%	57%	59%	66%
Writing	67%	48%	49%	70%
Mathematics	50%	50%	41%	64%

Six pupils, one of whom has a Record of Needs, have been referred to psychological services.

## REVIEW PROCEDURES

Bonnington Primary School was reviewed by a team from the Quality Development and Neighbourhood Management Groups of the Children and Families Department during April 2006. The review was based on the school's own standards and quality (S&Q) report for session 2005. This was considered by the team to form an acceptable basis for review.

The review programme based on the S&Q report comprised two key areas:

- ✿ learning and teaching;
- ✿ ethos;

plus the authority theme:

- ✿ continuity and progression in learning including transitions.

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 improvement plan, interviewed samples of pupils, staff and parents, and observed learning and teaching. In total, 16 lessons were observed.

A questionnaire was issued to a sample of parents. Seventy four questionnaires were sent to parents of primary pupils and twenty were returned. Thirty two questionnaires were sent to nursery parents and eight were returned.

### PARENTS'/CARERS' VIEWS

All parents/carers of nursery children who responded said their child enjoyed being in the nursery and found the activities offered stimulating and challenging.

All parents/carers who responded to the primary questionnaire agreed their child enjoyed being at the school and was encouraged to work to the best of their ability. In particular they indicated:

- ✿ the teacher really knows my child as an individual; and
- ✿ the school has good accommodation.

Some commented that they felt the school could do more to explain what part they could play in their child's education and explain its work more fully to them.

## FINDINGS OF THE REVIEW

### 1 LEARNING AND TEACHING

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

- ✿ The development of formative assessment has enhanced learning and teaching and ensured that pupils are involved in their learning and self assessment.

- ✿ Pupils are motivated to work well and enthusiastically within a stimulating and challenging classroom environment.
- ✿ Mathematics setting has helped to motivate pupils and raise attainment.
- ✿ Support for learning staff, visiting teachers and classroom assistants provide well-judged support.
- ✿ Written reports to parents are clear and concise, providing information of their child's progress in all aspects of school education including personal and social development.

Overall learning and teaching was good.

### Strengths in learning and teaching

In the nursery, there was effective long and short term planning across all areas of the curriculum. Staff/child interaction was of a high quality and both supported and extended learning.

Almost all individual lesson plans were of a very good quality with learning outcomes, activities and assessment strategies clearly identified. All teachers shared the purposes of lessons and success criteria with pupils, enabling them to become more involved in their learning and self assessment.

Expositions were clear and pitched at appropriate levels and some teachers used questioning very effectively. Some staff ensured pupils were ready to learn by using techniques such as Brain Gym. Most pupils were clear about what they had to learn and were motivated to work well. The cluster formative assessment initiative had ensured good continuous professional development opportunities had been provided for staff.

A range of teaching approaches was used consistently across the school and good account was taken of children's differing learning styles. Pupils' contributions were valued and praise was used to motivate and promote engagement. Learning environments, including the learning

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support classroom, were stimulating and motivating, with good use being made of space and other resources available. Visiting specialist teachers provided good quality learning and teaching in a range of curricular areas.

Setting in mathematics had increased motivation and engagement and allowed children's needs to be met more effectively. This had had a positive impact on attainment. Many homework activities were timed by class teachers to allow pupils to benefit from the well-attended, weekly homework club. Parents found teacher comments in homework jotters enabled them to support their child's learning.

Commendably, there was very effective deployment of learning assistants throughout the school and very good cooperation and consultation both within support for learning and between support for learning staff and class teachers.

Annual reports to parents were clear and provided information on aspects of their child's progress across all curricular areas. Parents commented that the reports they received showed teachers knew their child well.

### Areas for development in learning and teaching

The school should establish a systematic programme to review curricular and other policies and guidelines to reflect best practice. This should start with the learning and teaching policy and include a review of:

- ✿ forward planning;
- ✿ assessment, including individual target setting and national assessments; and
- ✿ homework.

The nursery should ensure a balance between adult directed and child centred experiences.

## 2 ETHOS

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

- ✿ There is a strong ethos of achievement established throughout the school.
- ✿ Pupils have responded positively to the school's approach to celebrating success.
- ✿ Staff are committed, morale is good within the school and staff-pupil relationships are positive.
- ✿ A wide range of enrichment activities enhances pupils' learning experiences.
- ✿ Parents have responded positively to their increased involvement in the life of the school.

Overall ethos was good with some very good aspects.

### Strengths in ethos

The atmosphere in the school was welcoming and positive. Almost all staff, including support staff, identified strongly with the school and valued the open and supportive culture developed by the recently appointed HT.

Almost all pupils wore school uniform. This, along with initiatives such as fundraising events and the commendable commitment to eco awareness, promoted a sense of community and pride within the school. Standards of behaviour were good.

Parents praised the inclusive ethos in the school and the very good relationships between staff and children. Staff were open and approachable and any concerns were addressed promptly. Family learning staff worked effectively to promote inclusion and the valuing of cultural diversity. Anti racist and anti bullying policies were being reviewed in consultation with the whole school community.

Staff actively encouraged parents to become involved in their child's learning and the work of

the school. The parents interviewed welcomed these opportunities, for example the PSA, school trips and other events involving the local community. There is an active School Board and the pupil council was effective in consulting with pupils and involving them in decision making.

Commendably, achievement in its widest sense had a high profile across the school. The Board of Achievement and Wonder Workers' assemblies and the changes to Golden Time introduced by the HT ensured achievement was recognised and celebrated. These had been received very positively by pupils, staff and parents and had enhanced pupil enjoyment and self esteem.

Parents commented positively on the improved communication with the school. The school newsletter had been adapted to include children's work and this innovation was warmly welcomed. Staff commended the improvements to communication within the school. These included the use of email, the installation of phones in the corridors outside classrooms and the circulation of staff meeting agendas and minutes. The increased opportunities to contribute to school development and the consultative approach fostered by the HT were also welcomed by staff.

Pupils and parents valued the many high quality enrichment activities offered by the school. These included sports, expressive arts and storytelling projects. Commendably, enrichment activities were often integrated into programmes of work, increasing pupils' engagement and motivation.

#### Areas for development in ethos

Communication with the school community should be further improved, for example by providing clear, readily available information for parents on wider aspects of their child's learning and by revising handbooks for staff.

The school, as planned, should develop a positive behaviour policy to ensure rigorous, clear and consistent approaches to behaviour management across the whole school.

The school should further promote achievement by ensuring there are clear expectations across the whole school for the high quality of pupils' work.

### 3 CONTINUITY AND PROGRESSION IN LEARNING INCLUDING TRANSITIONS

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

- ✿ There are improving links with the cluster primary schools and Trinity Academy.
- ✿ There is effective transfer of information at times within the school, at pre nursery/P1 and P7/S1.
- ✿ Good support is provided to pupils and families in the nursery and into the early years of the school by Family Learning.
- ✿ A specialist modern languages teacher has ensured that the P6/P7 pupils receive a solid progressive and continuous modern language experience to enable the smooth transition of modern language skills into S1.
- ✿ Changes to pupil records have enhanced the transfer of information about pupils with possible or actual additional support needs across the school.

Overall continuity and progression including transitions was good.

#### Strengths in continuity and progression in learning including transitions

There were good procedures to support children and families in the transition from home to nursery. There was effective liaison and transfer of information with other pre 5 centres. There were also good procedures in place to support children in the transition from nursery to P1. Transition records provided very good

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accounts of children's progress for parents and for the primary staff, including those at other associated primary schools.

The family learning staff effectively supported transition in the early years and those parents who accessed it valued this highly. Parents were very positive about the clarity and quality of the information they received and the support for them and their child during transition times. Nursery staff were beginning to use assessment information to plan next steps in learning and had recently introduced All About Me books to support this.

Arrangements were in place to transfer information from stage to stage at the end of each session. These included the transfer of individual pupil assessment folders and opportunities for staff to meet to discuss individual pupils. Job share partners also had efficient procedures for passing on pupil information and joint forward planning.

The school had very effective procedures for identifying and tracking pupils with additional support needs, including the additional support for learning tracking sheet for each child. Appropriate individualised educational programmes were in place and progress with long and short term targets was monitored regularly.

The support for transition from P7 to S1 was good. The annual residential trip gave pupils opportunities to develop personal and social skills as well as to take part in a variety of challenging outdoor activities. The transition programme was enhanced this session when the residential was undertaken jointly with Victoria Primary School. Further cluster support for transition was provided by Skill Force which worked with small mixed groups of P7 pupils on social skills. The North East working together team also offers support to selected P7 pupils over the summer holidays.

The cluster programme in place was effective in ensuring the smooth transfer of information about pupils to Trinity Academy. Procedures for primary/secondary liaison and transferring attainment data were carried out efficiently by the school. The early identification of pupils with additional support needs allowed support to be put in place from the earliest opportunity.

Cluster curricular initiatives and links were also well developed. These included structured activities in environmental studies, mathematics, English language and enterprise. In French, the cluster initiatives combined with the school's specialist provision for P6 and P7 successfully promoted continuity and progression in learning.

### Areas for development in continuity and progression in learning including transitions

The school should continue to develop its practices at all stages to further ensure continuity and progression in learning, to include:

- ✿ the production of written guidelines for staff and parents formalising the transition programme in the early years;
- ✿ the provision of clear and accessible written information on transition procedures throughout the school and into S1 for staff, including probationers and supply staff; and
- ✿ further development and clarification of the uses the school makes of assessment information at all stages.

The school's plans to develop a formal prediction and tracking policy should be pursued.

## SUMMARY

### Commendable features

- ✿ The very successful approaches to celebrating pupil achievement.

- ❄ The wide range of enrichment activities provided by the school.
- ❄ The school’s commitment to developing an open and welcoming culture.
- ❄ The excellent cluster initiatives which supported pupils in curricular and other areas.

**Areas for development by the school**

- ❄ The school should establish a systematic programme to review curricular and other policies and guidelines to reflect best practice, starting with the learning and teaching policy.
- ❄ The school should continue to develop its practices at all stages to further ensure continuity and progression in learning.
- ❄ The school should further promote achievement by ensuring there are clear expectations across the whole school for the high quality of pupils’ work.

**CONCLUSION**

Overall, the school’s S&Q report is a good reflection of the current development position.

The school will be supported to produce an action plan to meet the main recommendations in this report.

Examples of good practice identified in the commendable features will be recorded to enable their wider dissemination across the authority.

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