



QUALITY DEVELOPMENT SCHOOL REVIEW

CARRICK KNOWE PRIMARY SCHOOL

JANUARY 2007

◆ EDINBURGH ◆
THE CITY OF EDINBURGH COUNCIL

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

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THE SCHOOL IN CONTEXT

Carrick Knowe Primary School is a non-denominational primary school built in 1954 which serves the area of west Edinburgh. The catchment area comprises of a wide social mix with 9.5% of pupils in receipt of free school meals and clothing grants.

Carrick Knowe Primary School has 17 classrooms. The school building also includes a large gym hall with a stage, a dinner hall, an expressive arts base (also used for packed lunches), a computer suite, a music/modern languages room, a parents' room, two libraries – one infant and one P3–P7, two medical rooms, a baking/infant general purposes room, a sensory room, and a 'Time to Talk' room. The school grounds have a large grassed pitch area in the front playground, an infant playground, a P3 playground area, a Friendship Garden, a P4–P7 playground area and a nursery garden.

The current school roll is 396. There are 14 classes in the school.

Forty seven district pupils enrolled in P1 in August 2006 and eight district pupils enrolled elsewhere. There were also six non-district pupils and one late enrolment in P1.

The absence rate for 2004–2005 was 13 half days per pupil. This compares with authority and national averages of 20 and 19 respectively. There were no formal exclusions during the period.

As the headteacher (HT) is currently on secondment there is an acting HT in position. The acting HT is supported by two depute headteachers (DHTs). There is one principal teacher (PT) and there are visiting teachers for physical education (PE), music and instruction in brass, cello and viola.

The pupil teacher ratio is 23:1. In addition, 14 support staff are allocated to a range of whole-school responsibilities.

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

The budgeted pupil unit cost for 2005–2006 is £2416, compared to authority and national averages of £3024 and £3085 respectively. There is a School Board and parent teacher association (PTA).

PUPIL ATTAINMENT

National assessment 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:

	2004	2005	2006
Reading	86%	83%	89%
Writing	80%	70%	78%
Mathematics	87%	83%	80%

Twenty pupils, four of whom have provision within a Record of Needs, have been referred to psychological services.

REVIEW PROCEDURES

Carrick Knowe Primary School was reviewed by a team from the Quality Development and Neighbourhood Management Groups of the Children and Families Department during October 2006. The review was based on the school's own standards and quality (S&Q) report for session 2005–2006. 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:

- ✿ ethos;
- ✿ management, leadership and quality assurance;

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/carers, and observed learning and teaching. In total, 12 lessons were observed. A questionnaire was issued to a sample of parents.

One hundred and eighty two questionnaires were sent to parents and 61 were returned.

PARENTS'/CARERS' VIEWS

Almost all parents/carers of pupils in the nursery who responded to the questionnaire said their child enjoyed being at the nursery and found the activities stimulating and challenging. They were confident that if they raised a matter of concern the school would do something about it.

Almost all parents/carers of pupils in the school who responded to the questionnaire said that their child enjoyed being at the school and that they were confident their child would be helped if they were having difficulties.

All parents/carers said that the school was well led and had a good reputation in the community. They also felt that the school had good materials and equipment for learning and teaching.

FINDINGS OF THE REVIEW

1 ETHOS

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

- ❁ Pupils have a strong sense of identity with Carrick Knowe Primary School and enjoy

being at school – there are a number of forums set up to consult with pupils in decision making about school, for example, Pupil Council, Eco Group.

- ❁ The vast majority of children display high standards of behaviour and discipline.
- ❁ The majority of children feel they are treated fairly and are safe in school.
- ❁ The majority of parents support and participate in the life of our school – there is a very active PTA and School Board.
- ❁ The school is actively involved in the life of the community, involving parents, grandparents and local residents.
- ❁ Parents and other stakeholders are welcomed into school in a planned and purposeful way, participating in planned visits, classroom activities, and extra-curricular activities.

Overall ethos in the school was very good.

Strengths in ethos

Pupils and parents identified strongly with the school and were proud of the school's reputation in the local community. Almost all pupils wore school uniform and welcomed the opportunity to represent the school in a number of sporting and community events.

The school had a calm and positive environment which was conducive to ensuring a purposeful approach to learning. The contemporary displays within the school demonstrated the value placed on the children's work and informed the pupils of the positive contributions being made to different aspects of the school.

Pupils demonstrated that they felt safe and secure both inside the school and in the playground. They related very well to each other and to the staff.

Standards of behaviour and discipline were consistently high in classrooms and other areas of the school. The pupils were polite and friendly.

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They had been involved in devising their own class rules and consequently were clear about the kind of conduct expected of them and strove to achieve this. All pupils displayed a keen sense of equality and fair play.

The pupil council was well established and had contributed positively to the work of the school. They had been involved in a number of projects including litter control and organising playground toys. They also played a large part in the design and creation of the school's sensory room.

Pupils involved in the eco group had led a number of initiatives in the school such as the friendship garden and the recycling facility. The group had been very proactive and had achieved silver award status.

Pupils' achievements were recognised and celebrated through verbal praise, an award system and during weekly assemblies.

The school communicated very well with parents about its work. Monthly newsletters and an effective school website provided a good basis for passing information which was supplemented as required by letters and phone calls. Parents felt welcomed in the school and considered the staff to be very approachable and willing to listen.

The School Board and the PTA were both very supportive of the school. The School Board actively engaged in the work of the school by scheduling learning opportunities into their meetings. The PTA organised a large number of fundraising events for the school and provided finance for a wide range of projects which benefited the school.

Areas for development in ethos

The school should further develop and document their positive behaviour policy to ensure consistency at all stages in the school.

The role and the profile of the pupil council and eco group should be further strengthened and extended.

2 MANAGEMENT, LEADERSHIP AND QUALITY ASSURANCE

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

- ❖ Senior management team (SMT) have effective and clear remits and leadership of the school is very good.
- ❖ Planning for improvement is judged to be very good and staff are fully committed to the Improvement Agenda.
- ❖ Class teachers are taking on an active role in leading initiatives from the standards quality and improvement plan (SQIP) distributing leadership across the school.
- ❖ A monitoring programme has been established which includes peer shadowing.
- ❖ There are a variety of opportunities for pupils to become involved in decision making within our school, for example children on the Pupil Council were actively involved in identifying and leading developments with Health Promoting Schools.

Overall, management, leadership and quality assurance was good with some very good aspects.

Strengths in management, leadership and quality assurance

The acting HT provided effective strategic leadership within the school with a clear vision for the school, staff and pupils. She was well supported by her SMT and a systematic approach to the management of the school was continuing to develop.

Staff had been involved in taking forward a number of the development priorities which they had identified for the school. Opportunities had been created for staff to lead the development

groups as well as leading in particular curricular areas such as information and communication technology (ICT) and enterprise.

Staff demonstrated a strong sense of teamwork and had supported each other effectively. This was particularly evident in the collaborative planning of teachers of classes at the same stage where teachers had worked together to provide the best learning experience for the pupils.

The acting HT and the SMT had developed a comprehensive programme for monitoring school performance. This included sampling pupils' work, sharing classroom experience and regularly tracking pupils' attainment levels. Commendably, teachers had also been involved in a peer evaluation programme of sharing classroom experience as a basis for self-evaluation and improvement.

The content of forward plans were reviewed by the SMT and written feedback was given. This was supported by regular meetings with the class teacher to discuss pupils' progress and other relevant issues.

The acting HT had fully engaged all staff in agreeing priorities for school improvement. Commendably, a few staff had taken the opportunity to lead the school in auditing particular areas of its work. Pupils were consulted through the pupil council and parents were consulted through the School Board and the PTA. All parents were issued with an overview of the SQIP.

The school actively encouraged pupils to share in the decision making. Both the pupil council and the eco group showed enthusiasm in representing their peers in discussing and developing aspects of the school.

Areas for development in management, leadership and quality assurance

The school should set a schedule for reviewing and updating the present policies in full consultation with staff, pupils and parents.

The acting HT should continue to promote opportunities for staff to exhibit leadership in different aspects of the school's work.

The school should continue to develop the programme for monitoring and evaluating school effectiveness.

3 CONTINUITY AND PROGRESSION IN LEARNING INCLUDING TRANSITIONS

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

- ❖ Opportunities for collaborative planning are well used and a CAT session is set aside in June to enable staff to pass on relevant information to the new teacher.
- ❖ Class teachers meet termly with SMT to discuss progress of their class.
- ❖ Nursery transition records are very detailed.
- ❖ DHT (Early Years) is fully involved in the day to day running of the nursery.
- ❖ The P1 induction programme prepares children and parents very well for school and allows P1 teachers continuity in the children's learning.
- ❖ Both the acting HT and both DHTs meet regularly with cluster colleagues, including those from the secondary school.

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

Strengths in continuity and progression in learning including transitions

The nursery to P1 transition programme was very good. It was well organised and included a number of well-established activities to support the children's entry to P1. Among these were the valuable consultation sessions between

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staff, the good use of the authority transition document, the reciprocal visits and the carefully planned induction day. During the induction day, children spent the time with the P1 teacher while parents were given the opportunity to learn about the P1 curriculum and the learning and teaching methodology their child would experience when starting school as well as ways in which they could support their child at home. Parents felt well satisfied with these procedures and considered them to be helpful and supportive.

Good arrangements were in place to transfer pupil information from stage to stage. This included the systematic gathering of information about pupils' progress in a number of curricular areas, a scheduled transition meeting between the teachers involved, and subsequent informal meetings for clarification after the classes had transferred.

Teachers and the SMT had regular discussions about pupils' progress based on teachers' predictions and the subsequent tracking by the SMT.

Formative assessment strategies were being used in all classes across the school.

Pupils benefited greatly from the good P7 to S1 transition programme. This provided structured opportunities for the sharing of key information with staff across the sectors and included a number of planned events, which took place throughout the year. There was also very effective partnership working between primary and secondary colleagues in modern languages, science and learning and teaching.

Areas for development in continuity and progression in learning including transitions

Parents of children in the nursery should be further involved in their child's education. Weekly plans should be displayed for parents and they

should have more opportunities to access and inform their child's progress record.

The school should complete individualised educational programmes (IEPs) with full discussion with parents, class teachers, support for learning teacher and pupils where appropriate.

The school should monitor the continuity and progression of essential skills from nursery through to P7.

The developments in formative assessment should continue to be taken forward as described in the school's current improvement plan.

The school should introduce a systematic process of involving pupils in personal learning planning through the discussion and setting of personal learning targets. Through this the school should further develop the pace of learning, the involvement of pupils and their parents in discussing progress, and a more focused approach to forward planning.

SUMMARY

Commendable features

- ❖ The very good ethos as indicated by the calm and positive environment which made pupils safe and secure.
- ❖ The strong commitment to the school of pupils, parents and staff as indicated by the work of the pupil council, the eco group, the School Board and the PTA.
- ❖ The effective leadership of the acting HT, the SMT and the strong support provided by the staff team.
- ❖ The systematic quality assurance procedures which are in place in many aspects of the school's work.
- ❖ The detailed transition procedures from nursery to P1 and from P7 to S1.
- ❖ The regular and systematic discussions which accompanied the tracking of pupils progress in learning.

Areas for development by the school

- ❄ The SMT should set a schedule for reviewing and updating all policies.
- ❄ The school should ensure IEPs are completed.
- ❄ The school should seek to further extend its partnership with parents in terms of their child's targets and progress.
- ❄ The school should develop personal learning planning for all pupils.

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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