

QUALITY DEVELOPMENT SCHOOL REVIEW

CRAMOND PRIMARY SCHOOL

FEBRUARY 2008

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THE SCHOOL IN CONTEXT

Cramond Primary School is a non-denominational primary school built in 1974 which serves the area of west Edinburgh. The catchment area comprises of private and rented accommodation. The school serves the village of Cramond in the west of Edinburgh. Most children transfer to the Royal High School.

The current school roll is 360 with 73 nursery class children. There are 14 classes and a nursery in the school. The pupil teacher ratio is 22.5:1.

Forty three district pupils and seven non district pupils enrolled in P1 in August 2007.

The absence rate for 2006–2007 was nine half days per pupil. This compares with authority and national averages of 18. There were no formal exclusions during that period.

The pupil unit cost for 2006–2007 is £2799, compared to authority and national averages of £3077 and £3241 respectively. There is a Parent Council and Parent Staff Association (PSA).

PUPIL ATTAINMENT

The school's current performance in relation to national 5–14 attainment is:

	2005	2006	2007
Reading	94%	92%	90%
Writing	88%	88%	81%
Mathematics	95%	94%	90%

REVIEW PROCEDURES

Cramond Primary School was reviewed by a team from the Quality Development and Neighbourhood Management Groups of the Children and Families Department during November 2007. An experienced practitioner from another school in the city was also part of the review team. The review was based on the quality indicators in *How good is our school?* 3.

The review was based on two focus areas both of which included aspects of leadership and equalities:

- ✿ attainment and achievement; and
- ✿ learning and teaching.

The members of the review team made their evaluation on the basis of evidence provided by the school and their own observations.

In order to make their evaluation, the team consulted a number of school documents, including the improvement plan, interviewed samples of pupils, staff and parents, and observed learning and teaching. In total, 18 lessons were observed. A questionnaire was issued to a 20% sample of parents.

Seventy two questionnaires were sent to parents in the primary school, three were requested and 39 were returned. In the nursery class 75 questionnaires were sent out and 34 returned.

Verbal questionnaires were carried out with sample groups of pupils.

PARENTS' / CARERS' VIEWS

- ✿ Most parents of nursery child commented that their children enjoyed being at school and found activities stimulating and challenging. Parents were satisfied with the progress their child was making.
- ✿ Most parents commented positively on the pleasant atmosphere in the school and all parents agree the school had a good reputation in the community. However some parents would have appreciated more helpful information from staff on their child's progress and help with explaining the school's work to them.

PUPILS' VIEWS

- ✿ Almost all pupils said that they felt confident in expressing their views. They also felt they were listened to and valued as individuals and that teachers knew them well.

FINDINGS OF THE REVIEW

1 ATTAINMENT AND ACHIEVEMENT

The review team considered the following quality indicators from 'How good is our school? 3':

- 1.1 Improvements in performance
- 5.5 Expectations and promoting achievement
- 8.4 Managing information
- 9.2 Leadership and direction

Overall attainment and achievement was very good.

Strengths in attainment and achievement

There was a very welcoming atmosphere in the school. All members of the school community acted as role models in sustaining a positive school climate. The staff worked well as a team and this was reflected in their positive relationships and respectful interactions with pupils around the school. All pupils were very well behaved.

Pupils were continually encouraged to adopt positive attitudes to themselves, each other and society as a whole to help them develop into responsible citizens. The vision of the headteacher (HT) ensured that there was a strong whole school focus on the development of personal and social skills to raise self-esteem through emotionally literate approaches in many aspects of the curriculum. All staff were committed to this approach and recognised their responsibility in developing these qualities in pupils. This was enabling children to become confident individuals and staff and parents commented that this underpinned pupils' positive attitude and approach to learning at Cramond Primary School.

This positive school ethos supported and recognised a wide range of children's achievements. These successes were celebrated in a variety of ways; including stickers, certificates and 'caught being good' cards. Assemblies were used to share and celebrate achievements as a school community. Some senior pupils identified that although they appreciated the assemblies, they would have liked to have an opportunity to lead some of them. The recent revamp of the house system where points were awarded for a variety of achievements was highly regarded and supported by pupils and parents.

The use of praise by staff in lessons was well judged and targeted towards the personal achievements of individuals and groups of pupils. There was a very good range of opportunities for pupils to exercise responsibilities and to contribute effectively to the life of the school. Pupils, particularly in P6 and P7, were given support and training in developing the necessary skills to enable them to carry out their responsibilities effectively. Responsibilities included; playground pals, buddying and junior road safety officers.

A well-organised school council coordinated by the depute headteacher (DHT), played a full and active role in the work of the school, and was seen by pupils as the way to address issues. Class teachers ensured that students had time in class to discuss council issues, contribute and make decisions, ensuring that everyone was involved in and could benefit from the school council.

The use of authority analyses of attainment had been shared in detail with staff, and this had led to a very focused staff discussion on strategies to raise pupil attainment. Overall published attainment had shown a slight decline in the last three years especially in writing. This was not reflected in the work being produced

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by pupils in class. Instead, this reflected on the school's management information system for collecting and predicting pupils' attainment. A more consistent approach to tracking pupils' attainment had already begun to be implemented. Tracking folders for each class had been introduced this session and should continue to be further developed.

Most individual learners had demonstrated continuous improvement. This was particularly the case in P6 and P7 where progression of all pupils in reading, and boys in mathematics was very good. The needs of pupils were being met through well-structured arrangements for teaching in ability groups for language and mathematics throughout the school. There were particularly effective arrangements for pupils' learning in writing and mathematics in P7. Attainment in P2 showed a high proportion of pupils achieving their national levels of attainment, especially girls, who had all gained level A in mathematics.

The school considered improvement through analysis of attainment results and should continue through the use of other externally produced standardised tests, to help staff confirm pupils' ability and aptitudes and to assist teachers in meeting the needs of all pupils appropriately.

Increased monitoring by the senior management team (SMT) through focused meetings on attainment and on gifted and talented pupils will allow staff to discuss and deliberate their professional judgements in relation to pupil's performance in national assessments. Systematic monitoring of staff work by SMT should continue. This monitoring programme should continue to include formal class observations and greater sampling of pupils' work. Teachers should be given increased opportunities for moderation across the curriculum in order to develop staff confidence.

Most teachers had begun to identify and consider strategies to enhance the learning of the more able pupils. Pupils who required additional support were identified and supported by class teachers and learning assistants. Teachers had identified strategies for this and were continuing to develop the process. Learning assistants provided helpful information to teachers about individual pupils and attended review meetings for the children they supported in class.

Although the staff had agreed and understood the aims and their role in the school improvement plan, the plan itself was too descriptive and now requires more evaluative statements based on more formal views of pupils and parents. These views should be sought on a more regular basis. The school was good at using staff meetings to share good practice, review developments and discuss ongoing issues. Staff were encouraged to take on additional responsibilities. All staff said they felt they were valued by all members of the school community and that both the HT and the DHT were approachable and supportive and this enabled them to suggest ideas for improvement and to show initiative.

Staff demonstrated a strong determined commitment to school improvement and raising standards of achievement. The HT and DHT demonstrated commitment in ensuring success and achievement for pupils.

The school's ethos and focus on achievement had been fundamental to creating an environment where pupils felt safe, valued and had a strong sense of belonging. This was reflected in the pupils' learning and achievement.

Areas for development in attainment and achievement

A monitoring and evaluating policy should be further developed.

A stronger focus is required on school evaluation, to include consultation and views of parents and pupils.

School staff should continue to develop gifted and talented programmes to ensure that the pace of learning was consistent with pupil needs.

2 LEARNING AND TEACHING

The review team considered the following quality indicators from 'How good is our school? 3':

- 2.1 Learners experiences
- 2.2 The schools success at involving parents, carers and families
- 5.2 Teaching for effective learning
- 5.3 Meeting pupils needs
- 5.4 Assessment for learning

Overall learning and teaching was evaluated as very good.

Strengths in learning and teaching

The learning and teaching policy reflected the current practice in the school. Classroom visits showed a consistency of approach by teachers in their use of teaching strategies. Learning intentions were clearly shared with pupils, mainly through WALT (We Are Learning To) and WILF (What I am Looking For) in all lessons. All teachers recapped on previous learning to make links for pupils which helped the pupils focus on the learning experiences. In most lessons teachers' explanations and instructions were clear and allowed pupils to understand the purpose of the lesson and how and what they were learning.

The liaison between staff in nursery and the early years was an excellent feature of the school

and demonstrated continuity in learning and progression for pupils. This positive experience for children was further demonstrated in the active learning approach used in the nursery class and P1, where the interactive tasks allowed learners to maximise their progress. Structured play was developing well and learning assistants played a key role in its success. Commendably, they observed the learning and helped to identify the next steps in the play programme.

Pupils were motivated and aware of the high expectations placed on them and in turn had high expectations of themselves. In most classes learners were active participants in their own learning, knowing what they needed to do to improve and become successful learners. They listened attentively, were enthusiastic in response and showed good understanding of what they had been taught.

Most pupils were able to assess their own progress and regularly engaged in peer assessment and shared this confidently with others.

Teachers used a variety of appropriate strategies to respond to learners' needs during lessons, which were well planned and resourced and in most classes provided appropriate pace and challenge for pupils. Pupils were nearly always encouraged to ask questions and involved actively in discussion. Teachers used open and closed questions to good effect to direct the learning and teaching process. Some further development in this area would allow pupils to receive a higher quality feedback, and build upon responses to enable them to further develop their understanding of next steps in their learning. Pupils received evaluative comments on written work where appropriate.

The school should move towards individual target setting and the tracking of progress to

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provide opportunities for conversations between staff and all learners which would develop the pace of learning for all pupils and particularly the more able.

The school had made a good start towards consideration of Curriculum for Excellence. There was evidence of curriculum flexibility in the way the school was approaching cross-curricular projects and linking learning to other aspects of the curriculum for pupils. This could be seen in the work undertaken by the social subjects working group. All newly written programmes considered contextualising learning for pupils.

Where there were information communications technology (ICT) resources, teachers made good and effective use of them. There was some evidence of ICT being used in classes, and the use of the ICT suite helped pupils to practise skills. However the lack of ICT resources, particularly since the 'refresh' meant that this was not embedded in the learning and teaching of the school and in some cases pupils' learning experiences were not being developed or extended. Consideration should also be given to removing all shelves and resources from the ICT suite in order to provide a larger, more effective learning environment for a class of pupils.

Commendably all staff knew their pupils well and were very good at identifying and addressing, weaknesses in learners' knowledge and skills, and working together to support them. Differentiation was seen in most lessons through the outcomes for pupils. Additional support plans had appropriate targets and individual programmes for the less able were well structured. Parents of pupils with additional needs received ongoing, updated and meaningful information about their child's progress and were involved in reviewing his/her needs.

Parents were supportive and contributed as actively as possible to key aspects of their child's educational development. Parents received regular information, including written reports, on their child's progress across the curriculum. However, some parents were unsure of some of the terminology used and the content of their child's work. Attendance at parent evenings was excellent and parents commented that teachers were approachable. They were confident that they could arrange to meet with a class teacher to discuss their child's progress outwith these formal times. However, parents would like to participate more in their child's learning and development, but needed support with this. The nursery commendably did this each term, by informing parents of forthcoming themes and giving suggestions for developing their child's learning at home. This approach should be shared and used throughout the school. The completion of the new school web-site would also enhance this.

Areas for development in learning and teaching

The increase of suitable resources and greater use of ICT where appropriate.

The use of more skilled questioning to build on pupils responses.

The development of better feedback for parents to explain how they might help their child with his/her homework and to understand the 5-14 levels using the nursery example as good practice.

Continue to develop target setting and personal learning planning.

SUMMARY

Commendable features

- ✿ Very positive relationships between staff and pupils.
- ✿ High level of motivation of all pupils.
- ✿ Wider achievement is recognised and celebrated from nursery to P7.
- ✿ The development of active learning in nursery and P1.
- ✿ Consistent approaches to learning and teaching.

Areas for development by the school

- ✿ The development and greater use of ICT in lessons.
- ✿ The development of better feedback for parents to explain how they might help pupils with homework and understanding the 5- 14 levels.
- ✿ School staff should continue to develop gifted and talented programmes to ensure that the pace of learning was consistent with pupil needs.
- ✿ The development of a monitoring and evaluation policy to ensure formal approaches to monitoring pupil progress and learners experiences.

CONCLUSION

The school's performance in the focus areas of attainment and achievement and learning and teaching was very good.

The school will be supported to produce an action plan to meet the main recommendations in this report and a progress report will be requested the following session.

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