

QUALITY DEVELOPMENT SCHOOL REVIEW

GRANTON PRIMARY SCHOOL

AUGUST 2006

◆ EDINBURGH ◆
THE CITY OF EDINBURGH COUNCIL

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

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THE SCHOOL IN CONTEXT

Granton Primary School is a non-denominational primary school built in 1933, which serves the area of north Edinburgh. The catchment area comprises a large proportion of children living on local housing estates.

Granton Primary School has 10 classrooms. The school building also includes a resource room, a learning centre, a computer suite, an art room, a support for learning (SfL) room, a meeting room, an infant television and multi purpose area, a gym hall and a dining hall. The school grounds have the nursery outdoor play area with a container for storage of outdoor equipment, a large play area, two wooded areas within the playground and a kick pitch to the rear of the school.

The current school roll is 281. There are 12 classes in the school.

Twenty-six district pupils enrolled in P1 in August 2005; there were also five non-district pupils and one late enrolment in P1.

The absence rate for 2004–2005 was 22 half days per pupil. This compares with authority and national averages of 20 and 19 respectively. There were eight formal exclusions during the period.

The headteacher (HT) is supported by the deputy headteacher (DHT). There are two principal teachers (PT) and there are visiting teachers for English as an Additional Language (EAL), dyslexia, French, art, music instrumentalist and drama.

The pupil teacher ratio is 20:1. In addition, 10 support staff are allocated to a range of whole-school responsibilities.

The HT and almost all members of the teaching and support staff have entered the professional and development review and staff development and review scheme. The remainder of staff will be reviewed by June 2006.

The budgeted pupil unit cost for 2005–2006 is £3681, compared to authority and national averages of £3024 and £3085 respectively. There is a School Board and parent teacher association (PTA).

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	67%	69%	66%	72%
Writing	59%	55%	54%	70%
Mathematics	56%	63%	67%	77%

Twenty pupils, nine of whom has a Record of Needs, have been referred to psychological services.

REVIEW PROCEDURES

Granton Primary School was reviewed by a team from the Quality Development and Neighbourhood Management Groups of the Children and Families Department during March 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, and observed learning and teaching. In total, 12 lessons were observed. Overall learning and teaching was found to be very good. A questionnaire was issued to a sample of parents.

One hundred and two questionnaires were sent to parents and 36 were returned.

PARENTS’/CARERS’ VIEWS

Almost all parents and carers agreed that their child enjoyed being at school, they were encouraged to work to the best of their ability, that the school was very supportive and communicated well about important issues.

Most were satisfied with the homework their child received and also agreed that the school accommodation was good.

FINDINGS OF THE REVIEW

1 ETHOS

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

- ❁ The school has a friendly and caring atmosphere and there are high standards of behaviour.
- ❁ The new House System has been very successful in promoting a great sense of purpose and achievement in all pupils.
- ❁ The school has an important place in the community and considerable efforts are made to help the children value and contribute to the local community.

Overall the ethos was excellent.

Strengths in ethos

The school had a genuine open door policy, which contributed to the excellent communication with parents, and helped maintain the very strong links in the community. Over a period of several years considerable efforts had been made to create a welcoming environment. There was excellent school branded signage with clear messages about school ethos and an extensive range of pupils’ art and project work throughout the school. Ongoing investment in playground equipment and assistance from the playground supervisors had had a positive impact on structured play and social interaction at intervals and lunchtimes.

Parents acknowledged the hard work and commitment of staff and the very good reputation of the school within the community and considered staff to be approachable and supportive. Parental involvement was encouraged at all stages from nursery to P7. Parents actively supported children’s learning and the life of the school through involvement in shared reading activities, fundraising, homework, outings and various opportunities supported by the family learning worker. Special events were held throughout the year to celebrate success and achievement such as the ‘Daffodil Tea’ and ‘Strawberry Smoothie’. Commendably, the school operated a successful Breakfast Club in partnership with Royston Primary School.

The HT and DHT fostered a positive atmosphere throughout the school and in their dealings with pupils, staff, parents and visitors to the school. Pupil and staff morale was high and raising pupils’ self-esteem was at the forefront of much of the work of the staff. It was evident that staff provided support for each other in all aspects of school life.

The weekly school assembly was an excellent example of the school’s commitment to an ethos

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of achievement. Pupils were awarded certificates for achievements and many pupils contributed with their class or individually by reading poems and playing musical instruments. An impressive range of after school activities was offered to pupils.

Positive behaviour policies were implemented effectively throughout the school. Steps to promote positive behaviour were clearly evident at all stages. School rules were attractively displayed in the entrance area. Pupils were well behaved, polite and courteous in class and around the school. It was commendable that the pupils had helped produce guidelines for behaviour in school and when on excursions. The practice of staff escorting pupils to and from the playground at the start and end of the school day allowed regular opportunities to meet informally with parents and contributed to the good behaviour in and around the school.

Preparing pupils for their future lives in society was a key aim of the school. There were well-established links within the community including the local church. A rich range of visitors contributed to school events and projects and there were many and varied school excursions. P7 teachers used a range of approaches to help the pupils become more independent in their learning in preparation for the transition to secondary school. Current P7 and former pupils of Granton Primary School, now in S1 at Broughton High School, spoke highly of the many activities and experiences offered to them to help ease the transition to the secondary school.

The pupil council had been effective in decision-making processes for various aspects of development within the school. Pupils from nursery to P7 had recently been involved in launching a campaign to raise awareness of cystic fibrosis. Their efforts were acknowledged on the local evening news on television.

There was an active School Board and PTA and parents supported, and participated in, the life of the school. Parents were encouraged to be partners in their child's learning in a variety of ways, for example, classroom activities, participation in out-of-school visits and other extra-curricular activities.

The school used a wide range of effective methods for communicating with parents including an excellent monthly newsletter and by including them in events such as the 'Burns Night' and church services. Commendably the family learning worker had established a range of innovative projects which further enhanced strong links between the school and its community.

The school had a history of making high quality audio-visual presentations to allow parents and carers to share the experiences of their children. One example of this was the superb DVD capturing the exciting events of the P7 Benmore joint residential with Royston Primary School pupils.

Areas for development in ethos

Consolidate the links within the community to help ensure that this aspect of the excellent school ethos is maintained.

Review the arrangements for including pupils in decision-making processes about key school issues.

2 MANAGEMENT, LEADERSHIP AND QUALITY ASSURANCE

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

- ✿ There are very good monitoring procedures throughout the school including forward plan review, monitoring pupils' work and tracking pupils' progress.

- ✿ There is a well-established process of self-evaluation where all staff are prepared to openly discuss their work and performance and the work of the school.
- ✿ Pupils' work is regularly monitored by the HT and DHT and good feedback provided for teachers.
- ✿ There are regular meetings between the HT and all staff and also regular informal meetings with parents.
- ✿ The DHTs organisation and monitoring of baseline, progress and national assessment testing is very good.

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

Strengths in management, leadership and quality assurance

The HT and DHT had provided a clear strategic direction based on a vision for the school that took full account of the needs of the children in the Granton area. The HT was a charismatic leader with the ability to create confidence and motivate and inspire others.

The HT had developed very productive partnerships in the immediate and wider community and had very good relationships with pupils, parents, staff and appropriate agencies. The HT and DHT delegated and shared leadership very effectively. Staff, pupils and parents had a clear understanding of school aims, core purposes and values. Dissemination of important information was clear and prompt.

The improvement plan was well organised and provided a clear summary of aims, audit and action. It accurately summarised key strengths, areas for development and progress made in achieving previous development priorities. The action section provided a strategy for improvement in key areas along with well-chosen annual priority projects. Targets within the plan, tasks and timescales were clearly defined.

The nursery had compiled a very good separate improvement plan in line with identified areas for development. A rigorous programme of self-evaluation of all aspects of the nursery was a priority for session 2005–2006.

Individual staff roles and responsibilities were clearly identified and monitored as part of the ongoing monitoring procedures within the school. Monitoring of forward plans from nursery to P7 was thorough and written feedback provided helpful guidance.

The DHT had implemented a formal programme of classroom observation and provided written and verbal feedback to individual members of staff. She had also organised and assessed baseline tests and collated results were shared with appropriate staff.

Regular staff meetings had taken place to ensure good communication within the school. There are also informal discussions with those in and around the school on a regular basis to ensure full account was taken of the views of parents, pupils and the wider community.

A working group including the nursery teacher had been formed to review formative assessment strategies at all stages. This had been included as a priority for improvement in the current development plan.

Areas for development in management, leadership and quality assurance

Extend arrangements for self-evaluation, including sharing classroom practice, taking account of examples in *How good is our school?*

Review teachers' approaches to aspects of forward planning and notably to establish consistency in evaluation of the impact of lessons and topics.

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3 CONTINUITY AND PROGRESSION IN LEARNING INCLUDING TRANSITIONS

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

- ✿ The learning centre provides high quality support.
- ✿ The review of forward planning for writing and subsequent plans is very good.
- ✿ Granton Primary School staff make a significant contribution to cluster liaison over transitions, sharing of good practice and common developments.

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

Strengths in continuity and progression in learning including transitions

A thorough and well-planned programme was in place to support transition from nursery to P1. There were very good opportunities for informal and formal exchange of information between nursery staff and P1 teachers. A buddy system for nursery and P1 operated during the summer term to support the transition to school.

The nursery staff used many opportunities throughout the year to familiarise children with the school environment and teaching staff. Nursery children were included and participated in weekly assemblies, used the school gym hall and benefited from weekly sessions in the computer suite.

A range of helpful booklets had been provided for parents to support the transition to school. Attractive All About Me books provided a very good link between home and nursery. Very good use had been made of photographs and children's work to show continuity and progression in children's learning.

The learning centre provided excellent support for pupils with moderate learning difficulties. Pupils' inclusion in mainstream classes was, when appropriate, very effective because of the

good planning and relationships between class teachers and the principal teacher responsible for the centre.

Teaching plans provided concise specifications of what pupils were expected to learn. Opportunities for planning with colleagues were used well and in particular for job share, stage hand-overs from P1 to P7 and at transitions from nursery to school and primary to secondary school. Nursery transition records were clear and concise and provided helpful information about children's development and learning.

Curricular policies provided helpful guidance for staff to support continuity and progression. Learning outcomes were clearly stated in teachers' plans ensuring progression in daily learning and teaching. Effective individualised educational programmes were in place and monitored regularly along with teachers' plans.

Pupils' progress was systematically tracked and projected and actual performance was compared at regular intervals and trends were followed up. In some classes pupils had had the opportunity to evaluate their own progress and aptitudes.

Almost all pupils had made very good progress from their prior levels of attainment. Performance in terms of 5-14 levels of attainment was consistently good across a range of aspects.

The school had well-developed and effective links with schools in the Broughton cluster. Clear and detailed information about pupils' learning needs was exchanged at appropriate times. A number of well organised and effective cross cluster and cross sector initiatives and links were in place, including: creative writing, health, mathematics, science, modern languages and information communications technology (ICT). Key staff at Granton Primary School, in close working with guidance and support for learning

teachers at Broughton High School, had a key role in ensuring that Granton Primary School pupils' needs were assessed prior to them moving to the secondary school. This had helped ensure that a comprehensive programme of support could be put in place at the high school.

There were well-established and productive networks and partnerships with organisations in the local community. A range of new initiatives with outside agencies was being developed, including with Scottish Screen and the Number Partner scheme through Scottish Business in the Community.

Areas for development in continuity and progression in learning including transitions

Review learning and teaching strategies, taking further account of Assessment is for Learning, to establish consistency of approaches at all ages and stages.

Continue to develop cross sector and cross cluster links to help ensure pupils' progression with the primary school and then to the secondary school.

SUMMARY

Commendable features

- ✿ The quality of leadership and management by the HT and DHT.
- ✿ The monitoring of teachers' plans and pupils' work by the DHT.
- ✿ The commitment of all staff to promoting a positive ethos of achievement and celebration of success.
- ✿ The rich range of extra curricular opportunities provided for pupils.

Areas for development by the school

- ✿ Review learning and teaching strategies and approaches to take account of recommendations in *A Curriculum for Excellence*.

- ✿ Extend the current procedures for self-evaluation and including sharing classroom practice.

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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