



QUALITY DEVELOPMENT SCHOOL REVIEW

PRESTON STREET PRIMARY SCHOOL

FEBRUARY 2006

◆ EDINBURGH ◆
THE CITY OF EDINBURGH COUNCIL

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

THE SCHOOL IN CONTEXT

Preston Street Primary School is a non-denominational primary school built in 1897 which serves the area of South Edinburgh. The catchment area comprises Newington, St Leonards and Mayfield.

Preston Street Primary School has 11 classrooms. The school building also includes an information, communications technology (ICT) suite, a library, a physical education (PE)/assembly/dining hall and a general purpose room used for music and language teaching. The school grounds have two playing shelters, a basketball net, a low horizontal traversing climbing wall and a small number of benches.

The current school roll is 268. There are 11 classes in the school.

Twenty four district pupils enrolled in P1 in August 2005 and 12 district pupils enrolled elsewhere. There were also 11 non-district pupils enrolled in P1.

The absence rate for 2003–2004 was 13 half days per pupil. This compares with authority and national averages of 18. There were two formal exclusions during the period.

The acting headteacher (HT) is supported by the depute headteacher (DHT). There is one principal teacher (PT) and there are visiting teachers for PE, music, support for learning (SfL), English as an Additional Language (EAL) and guitar.

The pupil teacher ratio is 20:1. In addition, seven 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 review and staff development and review scheme. The remainder will be reviewed by June 2006.

The pupil unit cost for 2004–2005 was £2564, compared to authority and national averages of £2858 and £2866 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	83%	87%	84%	86%
Writing	80%	77%	76%	78%
Mathematics	76%	83%	88%	85%

Thirteen pupils, none of whom has a Record of Needs, have been referred to psychological services.

REVIEW PROCEDURES

Preston Street Primary School was reviewed by a team from the Quality Development and Neighbourhood Management Groups of the Children and Families Department during November 2005. The review was based on the school's own standards and quality (S&Q) report for session 2004. 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;
- * learning and teaching;

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

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

Sixty questionnaires were sent to parents and 24 were returned.

PARENTS'/CARERS' VIEWS

Almost all parents/carers who responded to the questionnaire were satisfied or highly satisfied with the school. In particular they indicated that their children:

- ✿ enjoyed being at school; and
- ✿ would be supported if they were encountering difficulties.

Most parents/carers were satisfied with the homework their child received, though 20% felt that this could be better.

A few comments identified the limitations of the school building and playground area. They commended the efforts which the school had taken to make the best use of this and also the use of local amenities.

Almost all parents/carers agreed that the school had a good reputation in the community.

FINDINGS OF THE REVIEW

1 ETHOS

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

- ✿ A very effective link with Saboro school in Ghana has provided very rich learning opportunities for our children.

- ✿ An eco school development group has made very good progress in raising awareness and developing initiatives. The evidence submitted is now working towards the school gaining green flag status.
- ✿ Awards have been achieved for the 'Roots of Language and Family Tree'.
- ✿ The Junior Road Safety Officers have consulted with pupils and their work evidenced contributed to the school gaining a silver award in road safety.
- ✿ The School Board and PTA support and enhance the work and life of the school.
- ✿ We are good or very good at promoting Race Equality and the school is recognised for valuing the rich diversity within our school community.

Overall ethos was good.

Strengths in ethos

There were some examples of very good practice in ethos.

Parents, staff and pupils all spoke highly of the link with the Saboro school in Ghana. This had provided a very good learning opportunity for the pupils. This development was enhanced by the involvement of the school community in fund-raising and with the parent and staff development group.

Parents and pupils valued the opportunity to be involved in the eco school development group which was leading the school in its quest for achieving a green flag. Parents highlighted that the school was very open to their suggestions for ideas. Pupils were very aware of the progress the school had made and how they would further contribute to this.

The school mounted a range of events which the community could attend. Positive feedback was received regarding pupil performances eg. Nativity and the "Sounds of Europe".

Ethnic, religious, cultural and linguistic diversity was recognised, valued and promoted as a positive feature of the school and its community. This was exemplified by the awards in 2004 for the “Roots of Language and Family Tree”. This was an excellent display. The reception of parents and visitors was well organised and welcoming.

Areas for development in ethos

Almost all staff successfully supported pupils with additional support needs. However further assistance should be provided to those pupils who find interpersonal relationship with peers challenging.

All pupils within classes should receive greater opportunity to demonstrate their strengths with further recognition of the positive contribution which they can make in the classroom and to the school. Praise should be clearly linked to pupil learning and behaviour and consistently applied across the school.

2 LEARNING AND TEACHING

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

- ✦ A number of successful strategies have supported raising attainment including support from the EAL Service and effective learning assistant support.
- ✦ Many staff have attended professional development opportunities and this has been shared with colleagues.
- ✦ Money allocated to SfL helped to purchase an additional computer, this is extensively used by both SfL and EAL. The activities are proving very popular with pupils and encouraging some to become more independent learners.
- ✦ Performances and the use of the Craggs sports centre enrich learning and teaching in music, drama, art and physical education.

- ✦ Successful applications for funding have supported initiatives in the playground and improvements in learning and teaching.
- ✦ The ICT learning centre and Smartboard were enhancing learning and teaching experiences.

Overall learning and teaching was adequate.

Strengths in learning and teaching

Some good examples of whole class teaching were observed. Individual pupil follow up activities were well planned.

Learning outcomes were shared with pupils.

The learning environment in classrooms enhanced the learning experience.

All staff contributed effectively to meeting the needs of those pupils with additional support requirements. The additional computer was used very effectively within the support for learning department. The application of appropriate software was enhancing pupils’ learning experiences and enabled pupils to work independently.

There was commitment of all staff to support effective learning and teaching. A number of staff had taken responsibility for initiatives as a direct result of funding eg. enterprise, formative assessment. The HT with the staff should ensure this now develops into a whole school policy to improve consistency and enhance learning and teaching.

Areas for development in learning and teaching

Assessment information should be used to meet the needs of all learners. Pace of learning should be increased appropriately to meet the needs of the wider range of pupil ability.

In consultation with parents, pupils and staff, a greater variety of homework activities should be developed.

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Staff should be supported in using the latest research into effective learning and teaching. In particular focus should be given to:

- ✿ allowing pupils to have greater active involvement in their learning;
- ✿ effective questioning skills; and
- ✿ creating opportunities for pupil self and peer assessment.

3 CONTINUITY AND PROGRESSION IN LEARNING INCLUDING TRANSITIONS

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

- ✿ A very good 10 week programme (Canongate Youth Project (CYP)) in Term 3 with P7 classes is recognised as supporting our pupils to make a smooth transition to high school.
- ✿ Effective assessment and development of support programmes of work for individual children and groups is contributing to improvement in support for pupils.
- ✿ Cluster initiatives in mathematics, writing and ICT have provided enriching learning experiences for children as well as supporting transition opportunities.
- ✿ Many of our EAL children make very good progress and significant achievements.

Overall continuity and progression in learning including transitions was good.

Strengths in continuity and progression in learning including transitions

Strong partnerships were in place with local nurseries. P1 teachers visited nurseries to develop relationships with the children and discussed children's needs with nursery staff. Early in P1, parents attended a curriculum information meeting to build on the partnership between home and school. Nursery staff and children visit the school to allow pupils to meet their future buddies. P7 pupils were used as buddies to support pupils in the transition from nursery and school.

Good arrangements for staff liaison were in place to ensure continuity for pupils from stage to stage within Preston Street Primary School. A class log containing assessment and curricular progress information was transferred to the receiving class teacher.

Very good arrangements were in place for transition to secondary school for those pupils involved in the CYP. They had an in-depth knowledge of the children. Children were also known to the CYP Team from an early age as there was Youth Club provision for pupils aged five to eight and eight to eleven.

Preston Street Primary School worked very well with the primary schools in the cluster which had resulted in enhanced learning experiences for pupils in mathematics, writing and ICT.

A good programme was in place for ICT skill development. This was delivered through the timetabling of classes in the ICT suite.

Areas for development in continuity and progression in learning including transitions

A consistent approach to forward planning should be developed which focuses on pupil learning outcomes.

The senior management team and all staff should develop a whole school quality assurance programme.

All staff should be fully involved in reflective and systematic self-evaluation for the explicit purpose of improving the quality of pupils' experiences and standards of achievement whilst generating valid and reliable evidence.

SUMMARY

Commendable features

- ❖ Pupils were provided with a rich range of opportunities by full utilisation of the immediate local amenities and through the wider learning experiences available in Edinburgh.
- ❖ Considerable efforts over the last few years have resulted in a welcoming environment and the playground as a purposeful resource.
- ❖ The school is very good at supporting pupils with additional learning needs and for those pupils who have English as an additional language.

Areas for development by the school

- ❖ All staff should contribute to developing a systematic whole school approach, which results in teachers receiving comprehensive and helpful guidance in learning and teaching approaches, support for pupils and assessment and recording.
- ❖ A whole school approach to self-evaluation should be developed and implemented.

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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