

QUALITY DEVELOPMENT SCHOOL REVIEW
ECHLINE PRIMARY SCHOOL

JUNE 2006

•EDINBURGH•
THE CITY OF EDINBURGH COUNCIL

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

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THE SCHOOL IN CONTEXT

Echline Primary School is a non-denominational primary school built in 1977 which serves the area of west Edinburgh. The catchment area comprises a mix of private and council housing.

Echline Primary School has 12 classrooms. The school building also includes a hall, a learning assistants' room, a music room, a general storage room and a general purpose room. There is a purpose built nursery unit adjacent to the main school building. The school grounds have a garden, an amphitheatre, a trim trail, traversing wall, woodland and grassed areas.

The current school roll is 321. There are 12 classes in the school.

Twenty-eight district pupils enrolled in P1 in August 2005 and two district pupils enrolled elsewhere. There were also nine non-district pupils enrolled in P1.

The absence rate for 2004–2005 was 12 half days per pupil. This compares with authority and national averages of 20 and 19 respectively.

The headteacher (HT) is supported by the deputy headteacher (DHT) and business manager. There is one principal teacher (PT) and there are visiting teachers for music, physical education (PE), German, French and art.

The pupil teacher ratio is 15:1. In addition, 16 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 is £3008, 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	92%	87%	90%	90%
Writing	89%	81%	82%	87%
Mathematics	89%	90%	94%	88%

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

REVIEW PROCEDURES

Echline 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 2004–2005. 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;
- ✧ 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. A questionnaire was issued to a sample of parents.

Ninety five questionnaires were sent to parents and 47 were returned.

PARENTS’/CARERS’ VIEWS

All parents/carers said they were satisfied with the behaviour of pupils and with school resources. They said that their child enjoyed being at the school, found the activities stimulating and challenging, and was encouraged to work to the best of his/her ability. They also said that they felt the teacher knew their child as an individual and treated their child fairly.

The majority of parents/carers said they were satisfied with the information they were given on their child’s strengths, weaknesses and progress and the homework their child received.

All parents/carers of pupils in the nursery class expressed satisfaction with all aspects of the accommodation, materials and equipment.

The majority of nursery parents/carers said that they were satisfied with the information they received about their child’s strengths, weaknesses and progress.

FINDINGS OF THE REVIEW

1 LEARNING AND TEACHING

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

- ✿ Teachers make effective use of a variety of teaching resources to enhance learning.
- ✿ All staff have undertaken continuing professional development (CPD) in questioning techniques and are using this effectively to support learning.

- ✿ Formative assessment strategies are very well used in all classes.
- ✿ Pupils at all stages set and review their personal targets with teachers.
- ✿ The support for learning (SfL) teacher has successfully supported learning throughout the school.

Overall learning and teaching was very good with some excellent aspects.

Strengths in learning and teaching

Learning and teaching in the nursery class was of a high standard. Children had many opportunities for choice and staff planning ensured a good balance between free play and adult led activities.

Teachers’ plans from P1 to P7 provided detail on all areas of the curriculum. Evaluations were made after each planning block and next steps in learning were evident in many plans.

The nursery unit and the main school were very well resourced and teachers used a variety of resources to enhance learning and teaching.

Commendably, the HT had led staff in the introduction of interactive whiteboard technology in every class base. Teachers and pupils demonstrated confident use of this resource in all classes and the technology had contributed positively to children’s enthusiasm for and involvement in their learning.

Similarly, the computer suite was used effectively to extend children’s skills and knowledge through the regular opportunities provided to develop their competence in the use of information.

The school had participated fully in the cluster Assessment is for Learning (AifL) developments. All teachers demonstrated confident use of questioning techniques and pupils responded positively to the variety of approaches in place.

Teachers consistently shared learning intentions and success criteria with pupils at the start of

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all lessons and a range of approaches was used to enable pupils to work collaboratively in their learning.

Pupils in all classes were encouraged to discuss and agree class, group and personal learning targets. Targets were displayed in classrooms and had been shared with parents. Regular discussion between pupils and with teachers enabled them to evaluate progress towards attaining personal targets. Praise for success in achieving personal targets was a feature of the school.

Assessment procedures were comprehensive, including external materials and the teachers' own assessments of learning. Teachers made good use of these formal and informal procedures to make informed judgements about pupil progress.

SfL was making an impact on pupils' development. Learning assistants and the SfL teacher made positive and significant contributions to the development of pupils with particular needs.

Support staff provided a very good contribution to learning and teaching throughout the school.

Mathematics setting from P4 to P7 had impacted positively on pupils' attainment and had supported effectively children's progression from P7 to S1.

Areas for development in learning and teaching

The HT and staff should review the use of and impact of the assessment files in identifying and recording specific next steps in pupils' learning. The review should align the assessment process with the excellent AifL approaches in place.

The SfL teacher should be supported further in extending the role in line with the school policy, particularly in the development of collaborative teaching.

2 MANAGEMENT, LEADERSHIP AND QUALITY ASSURANCE

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

- ✿ Staff are actively encouraged to continuously self evaluate practice, discuss the work of the school and audit the improvement plan.
- ✿ Pupils and parents are consulted about improvement plan priorities.
- ✿ Promoted staff regularly monitor, support and review the work of all classes.
- ✿ Pupils are actively encouraged to share in decision making through the pupil council.
- ✿ The Eco committee has agreed, planned and completed set tasks for the school.

Overall management, leadership and quality assurance was very good.

Strengths in management, leadership and quality assurance

Teachers and support staff constantly discussed and evaluated learning and teaching to develop the quality of pupils' experiences.

Commendably, the HT had fully engaged all staff during an inservice day in auditing progress for the standards and quality report and in agreeing priorities for school improvement. Pupils were consulted through the pupil council and at stage assemblies and were made aware of the plan's contents as appropriate. Parents were consulted through the School Board and PSA and all parents were issued with an overview of the standards, quality and improvement plan.

Parents could obtain a variety of information including the SQIP and school policies and procedures through the very good school website.

The management team, including the business manager had clear remits, which met the needs of the school and the pupils and were understood by all staff.

Teachers, support staff and a number of parents undertook a range of additional responsibilities as appropriate. These made a positive contribution to the quality of pupils' attainment and achievement.

Regular meetings took place between the senior management team and class teachers to review the content of forward plans and discuss pupil progress. Written feedback was given following the meetings.

All support staff appreciated their involvement in the regular meetings organised for them by the HT and business manager.

Nursery plans were submitted weekly and monitored by the HT. Feedback was shared with the nursery teacher where appropriate.

Promoted staff had undertaken monitoring in classes through sharing in set lessons, most recently to observe and comment on the positive impact on children's learning of the increased focus on effective questioning approaches.

Commendably, the HT and all staff actively encouraged pupils to share in decision making in the school. The pupil council members understood its remit and showed enthusiasm in representing their peers in discussing and developing aspects of the school.

The ECO committee had produced an ambitious programme which had been successfully completed, culminating in the Green Flag award. This excellent initiative, led by the DHT, was continuing to develop and had benefited both the school and the wider community.

A number of other initiatives including international links and enterprise education had been initiated by the senior team and implemented successfully throughout the school.

Areas for development in management, leadership and quality assurance

The school should continue to develop the programme for monitoring and evaluating school effectiveness. All staff from nursery to P7 should agree an annual monitoring timetable which systematically enables both senior management staff, class teachers and support staff to share in the regular evaluation of the quality of pupils' work and their learning experiences. Regular evaluation of the progress made in implementing improvement plan priorities and in meeting agreed targets should feature in the programme.

The school should update the existing homework policy in full consultation with staff, pupils and parents.

The HT should provide the nursery team with feedback on nursery planning and assessment at regular intervals throughout the session.

3 CONTINUITY AND PROGRESSION IN LEARNING INCLUDING TRANSITIONS

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

- ✦ The P1 induction programme prepares children and parents very well for school entry.
- ✦ The school's mathematics programme positively supports pupils' learning at all stages.
- ✦ Teachers' assessment information is used to provide accurate and up-to-date information to other members of staff and parents.
- ✦ Links with Queensferry High School English staff are ensuring continuity of learning from P7 to S1 for pupils working towards Level F writing.
- ✦ The school has developed a very good P7 to S1 transition programme.

Overall continuity and progression was very good.

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Strengths in continuity and progression in learning including transitions

The nursery staff had developed positive arrangements to ensure children were supported well for nursery entry.

A parents' area had been developed attractively in the nursery entrance hall where photographic displays showed children engaged in aspects of the 3 to 5 curriculum.

A variety of useful contact information on children's services and leisure opportunities was also available for parents.

The nursery to P1 transition procedures were very good. The PT had responsibility for organising a number of activities to support children's entry to P1.

The school's mathematics programme provided clear progression at all stages. Setting in mathematics from P4 to P7 had resulted in improved attainment.

The authority numeracy programme was well taught at level A to pupils in P1 and P2 and was impacting positively on attainment.

Commendably the HT and teachers had developed a level B mathematics programme to ensure continuity and progression between stages.

Teachers ensured that assessment information on all pupils was shared with colleagues. Parents received information on their child's current levels of attainment throughout the session.

An excellent writing initiative had been developed with cluster schools and Queensferry Community High School. This supported pupils working at level F and involved joint working between P7 and S2 pupils. Echline Primary School pupils had benefited from the support provided by the S2 pupils in developing their writing skills.

P7 teachers had also welcomed the opportunity to work with colleagues across the cluster to extend their own skills.

Pupils benefited greatly from the very good P7 to S1 transition programme. This provided structured opportunities for the sharing of key information with staff from primary to secondary school. A number of planned activities occurred throughout the year, notably in English language, modern languages, mathematics and PE.

Areas for development in continuity and progression in learning including transitions

The school should produce a nursery to P1 transition policy to be developed jointly by the nursery and early years staff in consultation with parents. The policy should also address the needs of children starting nursery and those who share places with other pre-school establishments. The roles of learning assistants and the SfL teacher should be clarified within the policy.

Similarly, the school should develop a transition policy to support P7 pupils moving to secondary school. This development should involve primary and secondary staff, pupils and parents.

SUMMARY

Commendable features

- ✦ The HT's commitment to including all staff in decision-making.
- ✦ The very high standard of work achieved by the school in implementing their ECO schools' programme.
- ✦ The excellent development of Assessment is for Learning approaches in place throughout the school.
- ✦ The excellent use of interactive whiteboard technology, evident in every class base.
- ✦ The excellent cluster initiative which supported pupils working towards level F writing.

Areas for development by the school

- ❄ The HT should lead staff in evaluating the effectiveness of the current assessment information in developing children’s learning. Consideration should be given to the excellent practice in place in developing AifL approaches in all classes.
- ❄ The school should continue to develop the current arrangements for monitoring and evaluation to ensure a consistent approach. All staff should be involved in agreeing an annual monitoring calendar which contains all aspects of routine monitoring with agreed dates.

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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