



sustainable thriving achieving

East Dunbartonshire Council

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**EAST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL
EDUCATION SERVICE
QUALITY IMPROVEMENT REVIEWS**

School Name Torrance Primary School

Date of Review 6, 7 and 8 March 2012

Purpose of the Review

The purpose of the review was to evaluate the school's capacity for improvement based on its own self-evaluation of key areas within How Good Is Our School 2 and Child at the Centre 2.

The review team visited classes, sampled pupils' work, and scrutinised key documentation and met with groups of staff, pupils, parents and members of the school/local community. In evaluating how well the school was progressing, the review team assessed the school's processes for self-evaluation and the impact of improvement planning.

Background

Torrance Primary is a non-denominational school situated in Torrance.

The roll of the school in 2011/2012 was 201 pupils in the primary sector and a nursery, which has 47 places between the morning and afternoon for children, aged 3-5 years.

HOW WELL DO OUR CHILDREN LEARN AND ACHIEVE?

QI 1.1 IMPROVEMENTS IN PERFORMANCE

STRENGTHS

- ✓ Standards of attainment have been consistently high across the school for a number of years. Standardised tests results are above the standardised norm and the EDC average in P1 and P7. Boys and girls perform equally well in these assessments.
- ✓ Children are making very good progress in developing their Literacy skills across the school and Nursery class.
- ✓ In the nursery, some children were able to talk about their favourite book. Nursery children can explore a variety of materials for writing and are attempting to write their own name and other words through emergent writing
- ✓ There was a high standard of writing in classes and also on display across the school. Children write very well for a variety of purposes and in a variety of genre. Older pupils had good opportunities for extended writing. The overall presentation of written work was of a high quality
- ✓ In the school younger children confidently discussed and identified the author and illustrator across a variety of texts. Children displayed good knowledge of common words through Speller exercise. Children listened and worked very well in cooperative learning groups. Pupils are confident participants in reciprocal reading groups and are able to structure and ask literal and inferential questions. Pupils participated effectively in collaborative writing groups on a task linked to their interdisciplinary topic.
- ✓ In the nursery children were able to identify and match shapes and patterns. Children were able to recite numbers forward from zero in the correct sequence and some could touch count items with accuracy and consistency to state how many. Most children have a good awareness of numbers they count in play situations and talk about more, less, bigger and smaller. Children are becoming familiar with the language of volume through water based activities and by pouring and filling in water troughs and sand.
- ✓ Throughout the school children are making very good progress in developing their numeracy skills. Pupils had a sound knowledge of symmetry and effectively developed symmetrical patterns. Pupils were able to use their multiplication skills in challenging games. Some pupils displayed the application of their knowledge of data handling within their interdisciplinary topic
- ✓ Children's artwork displayed throughout the school demonstrates a wide range of skills, including the use of colour and a range of media
- ✓ Pupils were able to successfully use ICT to develop a computerised animated video which included characters and the use of computerised speech.
- ✓ Science is being successfully implemented across the school. Children in the nursery have opportunities to explore different materials and life cycles of butterflies through play. Pupils were able to use their knowledge of electricity and circuits to create lighthouses as part of their interdisciplinary topic
- ✓ Children are developing leadership opportunities and contribute to the life of the school. They are developing their citizenship skills through a range of activities including the Eco Committee and Pupil Council. Throughout the year the school contributes to charities through whole school initiatives and topic work carried out by senior pupils and small groups of pupils undertaking charity projects.
- ✓ The school has achieved Three Eco School Green Flags as part of raising children's awareness of the environment. The Eco committee have successfully developed a sustainability policy for the continued implementation of ecological developments.
- ✓ The nursery has achieved "Smile Too" accreditation.

AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT

- Continue the work started to develop progression and continuity across the early level.
- Continue to ensure strong and secure achievement in numeracy through challenging and relevant contexts.

QI 2.1 LEARNERS' EXPERIENCES

STRENGTHS

- ✓ In the nursery, children exercise choice in activities and planning. Staff listen to, and respond to children's views and interests. Children are provided with an interesting and varied range of learning experiences for free play. The outdoor learning area is used effectively to promote independence, motivate and engage the children in their learning.
- ✓ In all classes children are polite, well behaved and respond eagerly to questions from their teachers. They are enthusiastic and in most lessons engage well in their learning. Feedback from children's questionnaires and discussion demonstrates that they enjoy attending Torrance Primary School and feel a close identity with the school.
- ✓ Assessment for Learning Strategies (AifL), including the sharing of learning intentions, success criteria and a plenary session, were used successfully in classes visited to improve pupils involvement in their learning. The school is developing a number of formats for personal learning planning as a means of securing greater engagement of pupils in their learning. A group of pupils spoke confidently about their personal targets in learning
- ✓ In writing children receive feedback which helps them to improve. A language framework (VCOP) is being used successfully to improve the quality of children's writing and helps children know what to do to improve their work.
- ✓ This session the school has implemented a termly shared learning approach to homework this session with a choice of tasks for children to engage with. Initial feedback from staff, pupils and parents is positive.
- ✓ Feedback from children's surveys and discussions show they enjoy coming to school, are very positive about their school experiences, feel safe and cared for, they are getting on well, are encouraged to do their best and are expected to take responsibility for their own work. Almost all feel respected and valued in school.
- ✓ Children use ICT successfully to develop their skills for learning and knowledge across the curriculum. The nursery makes effective use of technologies including interactive whiteboards and Beebots to develop the children's ICT skills. Throughout the school, pupils have participated in a variety of Glow meet opportunities
- ✓ Commendably learners are involved in the planning process for each of their interdisciplinary learning activities. This increases the relevance and personalisation and choice in learning for learners.
- ✓ The nursery has recently developed effective profiles for all children, focussed on observations and linked to experiences and outcomes which are effectively used to inform progress and plan for future learning. These are shared with parents and are used to inform the individual child's next steps in learning.
- ✓ Children are motivated and keen to learn. They engage fully in activities and participate well with their peers. Collaborative learning is a strong feature of classroom activities. The emphasis on the development of social skills is having a clear impact on their ability to work as part of a group.

- ✓ In the upper school there were examples of well planned reciprocal reading. Children worked very well in groups taking on roles confidently to understand and apply reading skills. Children had a very good understanding of different questions and used Blooms Taxonomy to devise higher order questions for each other.

AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT

- Continue to develop personal learning planning to help children become more responsible for planning and evaluating their own learning
- The school should continue with its plans to develop a collaborative approach to learning across the school

HOW GOOD IS THE DEVELOPMENT OF CURRICULUM FOR EXCELLENCE?

QI 5.1 THE CURRICULUM

STRENGTHS

- ✓ The head teacher and depute head teacher provide clear direction in strategic planning in developing *Curriculum for Excellence*. Staff are involved in developing the curriculum through cluster working and school development work.
- ✓ Teachers at all stages are becoming more confident at using experiences and outcomes when planning learning experiences in literacy and interdisciplinary learning activities.
- ✓ The curriculum in the nursery is designed to enable all children to make progress in key aspects of their learning. The curriculum is based firmly on play and active learning. Responsive planning is well used in the nursery to allow children to identify their areas of interest.
- ✓ Nursery staff plan and reflect on the curriculum provided in their daily plans to evaluate the impact of these activities on children
- ✓ Teachers' weekly planners are well used and include evaluations leading to identification of next steps.
- ✓ The development of a three year programme of inter disciplinary learning provides motivational contexts for applying skills across all areas of the curriculum. The programme takes account of the principles for curriculum design and provides opportunities for teachers to be flexible and innovative in meeting the needs of learners.
- ✓ The school has recently undertaken a full review of its English Language programmes to reflect the experiences and outcomes of *Curriculum for Excellence*. The new planning also provides a clear link to the assessment and tracking of pupils
- ✓ The school has very well planned transition arrangements in place with Boclair Academy, with its own nursery class and from stage to stage. In addition enhanced transition arrangements are in place for pupils with additional support needs at key transition points.
- ✓ Recent effective cluster developments to ensure relevance and coherence have included projects in science, modern languages and Maths GLOW homework. This session the cluster is developing reading skills at all levels through cluster working and reciprocal visits to develop a common approach to learning, teaching and assessment.

AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT

- Continue to develop the curriculum using experiences and outcomes in line with *Curriculum for Excellence*.

HOW WELL ARE CHILDREN SUPPORTED IN THEIR LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT?

QI 5.3 MEETING LEARNING NEEDS

STRENGTHS

- ✓ Teachers differentiate work appropriately to meet the needs of children including higher achieving children
- ✓ Very good processes are in place to monitor and track pupils with additional support needs
- ✓ A consistent approach to the identification of support needs is deployed across the school
- ✓ Early identification of support need is in place in the nursery through careful observation. The nursery and school review and evaluate children's needs at an early stage and organise regular support to remove the barriers preventing children from participating fully in their education. Support for individual pupils is regularly reviewed
- ✓ Support plans and CSPs are well organised with appropriate evaluation and review procedures in place. Parent/carers and partner agencies are involved in the review process.
- ✓ Specialist staff are appropriately deployed to support children with additional support needs. Support staff make a highly valuable contribution to meeting children's needs and work well with their teaching colleagues. There are notable examples of inclusion.

AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT

- Continue to provide appropriate pace and challenge for all learners

QI 5.9 IMPROVEMENTS THROUGH SELF-EVALUATION

STRENGTHS

- ✓ The school improvement plan has a clear focus on outcomes for learners, based on self evaluation, and through the strong commitment of all staff has had a positive impact on the implementation of *Curriculum for Excellence*.
- ✓ Improvement plan priorities are monitored, evaluated and amended as required during monthly management meetings.
- ✓ Staff are committed to on-going evaluation of developments throughout the session to secure the very best outcomes for all learners.
- ✓ CPD is linked to the schools improvement agenda and some recent opportunities have involved cluster development working and training on cooperative learning and reciprocal methodology
- ✓ The school is developing its procedures for tracking children's progress in line with *Curriculum for Excellence* levels. The introduction and use of standardised test data, alongside other assessment information, provides a clearer focus on children's attainment and achievement.
- ✓ Senior managers have managed the pace of change very successfully through meaningful consultation with stakeholders. Staff are secure in the knowledge that their views on developments are valued.

- ✓ The nursery staff work together to reflect on practice and make improvements in activities and programmes to secure continuous improvement.
- ✓ Annual self evaluation is undertaken for the Care Commission. The work of the nursery is monitored and evaluated by the SMT through scrutiny of their plans and focussed observation visits.
- ✓ The head teacher and depute head teacher monitor the work of the school through scrutinising forward plans, analysis of assessment information, including children's work, visits to classrooms, and by gathering the views of staff, children and parents. The self evaluation system focuses closely on children's learning.
- ✓ The head teacher and promoted staff meet regularly with class teachers to track children's progress and plan the next steps in learning.
- ✓ The views of learners are sought across the session through pupil focus groups or pupil surveys and the results are used to impact on classroom experiences. The questions used with pupils during focus groups are based on Blooms Taxonomy .

AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT

- Continue to develop moderation within the school and also with other schools to ensure staff have a shared understanding of standards and expectations.
- Continue to develop rigorous monitoring and tracking procedures across all areas of the curriculum

WHAT IS THE SCHOOLS CAPACITY FOR IMPROVEMENT

The outstanding leadership of the head teacher, supported by a very effective management team and the commitment across the whole school to self-evaluation ensures that the school is well placed to continue to improve. The Education Quality Development Service (EQDS) will continue to support the school to address the areas for development identified in this report