

QUALITY DEVELOPMENT SCHOOL REVIEW

CAMERON HOUSE NURSERY SCHOOL

JANUARY 2008

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Excellent:	excellent
Very good:	major strengths
Good:	important strengths that clearly outweigh areas for improvement
Adequate:	strengths just outweigh weaknesses
Weak:	important weaknesses
Unsatisfactory:	major weaknesses
Almost all:	90% plus
Most:	75% plus
Majority:	50% plus
Some:	15% plus
Few:	less than 15%

THE SCHOOL IN CONTEXT

Cameron House Nursery School was built in 1934, and serves the area of south Edinburgh.

The current school roll is 16 with four children attending in the morning and 12 children attending full time. Eight three to five year old children enrolled in 2007-2008. The child : adult ratio is 8:1.

REVIEW PROCEDURES

Cameron House Nursery School was reviewed by a team from the Quality Development and Neighbourhood Management Groups of the Children and Families Department during October/November 2007. The review was based on the quality indicators in The Child at the Centre 2.

The review was based on one focus area:

- ✿ children's achievement.

The members of the review team made their own 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 staff and parents, and observed learning and teaching in the nursery classroom and outside area. A questionnaire was issued to a sample of parents.

Ten questionnaires were sent to parents and seven were returned.

PARENTS' /CARERS' VIEWS

- ✿ Almost all parents said their child enjoyed being at the school. They thought the school was well led and that the activities were stimulating and challenging. Almost all parents thought the school had a good reputation in the community and there were good materials and resources for learning. Parents felt that they got regular and helpful information on their child's progress and that the school had explained to them what part they could play in their child's education.

FINDINGS OF THE REVIEW

1 CHILDREN'S ACHIEVEMENT

The review team considered the following quality indicators from The Child at the Centre 2:

- 1.1 Improvements in performance
- 2.1 Children's experiences
- 5.2 Teaching for effective learning
- 5.4 Assessment for learning
- 8.3 Management and use of resources and space for learning
- 9.3 Developing people and partnerships

Overall children's achievement was considered to be very good.

Strengths in children's achievement

The school provided a safe, secure, stimulating and attractive environment. A wide range of high quality experiences and resources supported children's progress in learning. The attractive outdoor area was well resourced and provided a very good range of opportunities for children to develop a range of skills. Resources throughout the school were organised and catalogued very effectively and could be accessed easily by staff and children. Attractive displays including photographs and examples of children's work enhanced the environment and encouraged children's purposeful participation in play experiences.

There was a strong emphasis on distributive leadership throughout the school. The excellent leadership of the headteacher (HT) effectively promoted a strong sense of teamwork in staff which created a very positive ethos in the school. The HT had a clear vision for the school and shared this with staff, children and parents. Staff had clear roles and responsibilities and their contribution to the ongoing development of the school was valued.

The school had a well balanced improvement plan in place with a relevant range of priorities for improvement. This included developing personal learning planning and projects relating to the environment and health. Staff, children and parents were enthusiastically involved in all the priorities. For example, children showed a keen awareness of recycling and other environmental issues. Their views were sought and used in a variety of ways to further enhance learning experiences. Tasks were shared well and a strong evaluative approach ensured good progress was being made in taking developments forward. Evaluation of questionnaires from parents and children had enabled the HT to include relevant action points in the plan.

The school had a very good reputation and had well developed links with the community. Links with other professionals involved in children's learning were also well developed. Regular and effective planning meetings involving all staff ensured children's needs and interests were fully developed. Clearly documented long term, short term and daily plans offered a wide range of experiences and activities to meet the needs of all children. The HT regularly evaluated the effectiveness of planning procedures to ensure the best possible outcomes for children. The recent inclusion of current approaches to the curriculum had enhanced the recording and tracking of children's progress in learning. Curricular policies were in place to support

curriculum development and these were attractively presented for parents on the notice board.

The system for recording and assessing children's progress was excellent. The 'Personal Learning Journeys' included photographs and observations showing evidence of children's development as successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors.

Children and parents were actively encouraged to contribute comments which were carefully recorded by staff. These were used to help identify next steps in learning and further engage parents and children in the learning process. Children showed a strong sense of pride and ownership of their personal learning journeys and regularly accessed them to share their successes and achievements with peers, parents and staff. The personal learning journeys showed clearly that children were making very good progress in their learning and were participating in a wide range of experiences.

The folders had been favourably received by other professionals involved in the children's learning to provide up-to-date information on children's progress.

The HT had been invited to contribute to recent national conferences to share her knowledge and skills on personal learning planning with other colleagues.

Staff compiled detailed and informative transition records for children moving on to primary school. Other summative reports for children were shared with parents twice per year. Effective individualised educational programmes (IEPs) and additional support plans had been compiled in consultation with parents and other professionals involved to support children who required additional support for learning.

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Staff interacted effectively with children to extend and support their learning. Children approached staff confidently for help and to engage in conversation. Very good use was made of praise to build children's confidence and self esteem. The further enhancement of staff skills in this area had been identified as a priority. This would be developed through use of videos and other relevant strategies to ensure interaction and questioning were of the highest quality to support children's learning.

A range of innovative strategies was in place to support children's emotional development including star qualities, golden stars, Circle Time and golden days.

Children showed great pride and a sense of achievement when awarded a golden star badge. To establish a positive ethos in the nursery there had been an extensive period of discussion to raise children's awareness of their own and others' feelings. As part of the importance being given to emotional well being children could access badges indicating their feelings at particular times throughout the day.

Parents were encouraged to participate in the life of the school and to be fully involved in their child's learning. An effective policy was in place to ensure good partnership and communication with parents. Helpful guidance was provided for parents on supporting their child's learning. Plans and information on key activities were displayed in the entrance area. Several drop-in sessions were offered throughout the year to provide information on current school priorities. A recent opportunity was well attended and gave parents an informative overview of the school's progress with a range of developments. This included displays of resources, photographs and children's work. Feedback from this event was very positive.

The nursery ensured that effective learning experiences were provided to ensure children

made very good progress in all aspects of their learning and development. Children were highly motivated and happy.

SUMMARY

Commendable features

- ✿ The excellent leadership and vision of the headteacher.
- ✿ The culture of distributive leadership.
- ✿ The welcoming and attractive learning environment.
- ✿ The folders of children's achievement – Personal Learning Journeys.

Areas for development by the school

- ✿ The school should further develop staff skills in questioning, listening and reflective responses, as planned.
- ✿ The school should continue to evaluate the effectiveness of the personal learning journeys to ensure future developments continue to have a positive impact on children's progress in learning.

CONCLUSION

The school's performance in the focus area of children's achievement 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.