

QUALITY DEVELOPMENT SCHOOL REVIEW

THE SPINNEY LANE NURSERY SCHOOL

SEPTEMBER 2007

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Very good:	major strengths
Good:	strengths outweigh weaknesses
Fair:	some 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

The Spinney Lane Nursery School was built in 1977, and serves the area of south Edinburgh. The catchment area comprises council and privately owned houses and flats.

The Spinney Lane Nursery School has two classrooms. The school building also includes a resource room and parents' room. The school has gardens to the front and rear with extensive soft surfaces, mature trees and shrubbery, a cycle track, an orchard and a field.

The current school roll is 93 with 35 children attending in the morning, 34 in the afternoon and 24 children attending full time. Fifty nine, three to five year old children enrolled in 2005-2006.

Staffing consists of the headteacher (HT), 1.5 full time equivalent (FTE) nursery teachers, five full time nursery nurses, one nursery nurse parent worker (Sure Start), one nursery nurse (integration audit), one learning assistant (25 hours), one school cleaner in charge and one secretary. The pupil:adult ratio is 8:1 for full time children and 10:1 for part time children.

The HT and almost all of the teaching staff have entered the professional review and development (PRD) scheme. Almost all of the support staff have entered the performance review and development (PRD) scheme. The remaining staff will have entered the above schemes by the end of June 2007.

There is a parent teacher association (PTA).

REVIEW PROCEDURES

The Spinney Lane Nursery School was reviewed by a team from the Quality Development and Neighbourhood Management Groups of the Children and Families Department during May 2007. 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 be of a very good quality and to form a very good basis for review.

The review programme, based on the S&Q report, comprised the authority theme:

- ✿ continuity and progression in learning including transitions.

The review team considered statements made by the school about the authority theme, and made their own 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 own report.

In order to make their evaluation, the team consulted a number of school documents, including the school 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.

Ninety questionnaires were sent to parents and 27 were returned.

PARENTS' / CARERS' VIEWS

Almost all parents/carers felt that their child enjoyed being at the school, that activities were stimulating and challenging and that the school was well led. Most parents/carers felt they got helpful regular information about their child's progress and that the school was good at explaining its work to them and were content with the part they were asked to play in their child's education.

FINDINGS OF THE REVIEW

1 CONTINUITY AND PROGRESSION IN LEARNING INCLUDING TRANSITIONS

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

- ✿ Progress is effectively and consistently monitored for each child, in each key area, in on-going profiles (Learning Story Folders) by perceptive, written observations by staff, photographic records and examples of children's work.
- ✿ Next steps for learning, which present an achievable level of challenge, are highlighted for each curriculum area for each child.
- ✿ Very good planning procedures are in place which include long-term, monthly and daily plans: these ensure depth and progression for all children.
- ✿ Effective procedures support transitions at key stages (home - nursery, child and family centre - nursery, room - room within nursery, nursery - primary).
- ✿ In conjunction with relevant professionals and parents, individualised educational programmes (IEPs), Support and Care Plans are written for children with Additional Support Needs, shared with staff and are regularly evaluated.
- ✿ Parents' involvement in their child's learning and development is supported by sharing learning story folders, regular newsletters, a supportive PTA, curriculum evenings, family fun days, parent consultations, informal discussions and a range of school-produced leaflets and other events.

Overall continuity and progression in learning including transition was considered to be very good with some excellent features.

Strengths in continuity and progression in learning including transitions

The learning environment was attractive, well organised and stimulating and all areas were well resourced to develop the curriculum through play and exploration. Visual timetables, good use of photographs and symbols created a positive and inclusive ethos for learning. The quality of staff-child interaction was very good.

Staff were skilled in their use of questioning to extend learning, thought and discussion. Support for children with additional needs was skilled, well-judged and effective.

The school had produced comprehensive guidelines to fully support children and families at key points of transition. Parents were very impressed with 'settling in' procedures and commended the HT in her commitment to responding to individual needs. They commented positively on the professional and welcoming staff.

Key workers spent valuable time explaining nursery procedures with new parents and the key worker system ensured that parents / carers were involved and supported from the outset. Effective procedures for transition from part-time to full-time were tailored to individual children's needs. The school had established excellent links with the local Child and Family Centres and this enabled staff to provide effective support for children who had additional support needs.

The school had excellent arrangements to support transition from nursery to primary and special schools. Parents had a huge awareness and appreciation of this programme and spoke highly of the co-operation between the schools. Children also spoke confidently about their move to P1.

The school had produced a very informative handbook and policies to support partnership with parents and to involve them in their child's learning. Parents valued the parents' evening, "How You Can Help Your Child To Learn" and the excellent range of curricular leaflets.

The school had effective planning procedures. These outlined learning and took account of children's interests and next steps in learning. Each child had a personal learning folder which included useful information from home. Staff recorded clear informative observations under

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each of the five curricular areas. They had started to include assessment information within the folder and next steps for learning were highlighted. The folders were made available for parents on a weekly basis.

Individual plans for additional support for learning were relevant and well implemented. The school liaised effectively with other professionals.

Area for development in continuity and progression in learning including transitions

The school should continue to develop personal learning planning and ensure that assessment information is systematically recorded and used to plan next steps in learning.

The school will be supported to produce an action plan to meet the main recommendation in this report.

Examples of good practice identified in the commendable features will be recorded to enable their wider dissemination across the authority.

SUMMARY

Commendable features

- ✿ The stimulating and attractive learning environment.
- ✿ The very effective partnerships with parents.
- ✿ The quality of staff child interaction.
- ✿ The very good support for children with additional needs.
- ✿ The very effective transition arrangements at all stages.

Area for development by the school

- ✿ Continue to develop personal learning planning and ensure that assessment information is systematically recorded and used to plan next steps in learning.

CONCLUSION

Overall, the school's S&Q report is a very good reflection of the current development position.