How Good is Newton Primary School?

The purpose of this report is to provide an answer to the question – how good is our school?

The report highlights the main findings from the Standards and Quality Review of Newton Primary School that was carried out by South Ayrshire Council’s Department of Education, Culture and Lifelong Learning in March 2006.

The programme of Standards and Quality Reviews is used by the Department to validate and confirm the school’s self-evaluation of the quality of educational provision. The review was commissioned by the Department’s Quality Development Unit and was carried out by a lead independent educational consultant, an independent educational consultant and two South Ayrshire Council Quality Improvement Officers.

The review team spent four days in the school and assessed the school’s processes for self-evaluation, observed learning and teaching evaluated pupils’ attainment and interviewed groups of pupils and staff. The review covered key aspects of the work of the school at all stages.

The review and the report were structured to follow the seven key areas of the national school self-evaluation document, How good is our school? (HGIOS) published by HM Inspectorate of Education.

The seven key areas are:

- Curriculum
- Ethos
- Attainment
- Resources
- Learning and Teaching
- Management, Leadership
- Support for Pupils
- Quality Assurance

A number of quality indicators are associated with each key area. This report concentrates on them and highlights where the school is doing well and points to actions which will bring about improvement.

The school, working with the Council’s Department of Education, Culture and Lifelong Learning, will now prepare a plan which outlines the actions that will be taken to bring about the improvements highlighted in this report.
What the school does well

- Pupils are friendly, courteous and cheerful.
- Almost all pupils are well behaved.
- The new head teacher is approachable, motivated and has a clear vision for the development of the school.
- Staff are caring, committed to the school and supportive of each other.

Where the school has areas for development

- The strategic and operational management of learning and teaching, curriculum and personnel requires rigorous review.
- The school should promote higher expectations for pupil attainment and increase the pace of learning across the curriculum.
- The school should increase rigour and challenge in learning for all children in all stages of the nursery and primary school.
- The management team should closely monitor children's learning, attainment, motivation, experiences and support, and work with the authority to secure improvement in these key areas.

Curriculum

- Pupils experience a broad curriculum in the nursery and primary classes.
- There are programmes of work in most curricular areas.
- Most classrooms provide a good learning environment for pupils.
- There is a good variety of children's art work on display throughout the school.
- The plans by the Pupil Council for a healthy tuckshop will enhance the health education programme.

- The school should adopt a skills approach to programmes in relation to the 5-14 curriculum.
- More enterprise activities should be developed in addition to progressive programmes for information and communications technology (ICT) and for personal and social education.
- The school should make more use of the computer suite and of ICT across the curriculum.
- The school should review each curricular area in turn to ensure a progressive and coherent core programme with extension and support materials.
- The nursery should review the book and writing areas, opportunities for listening and talking and give a higher profile to mathematics.
**Attainment**

The school has made a start in tracking the attainment of pupils.

- The school should raise expectations, increase pacing and provide more challenge and rigour for all pupils across the curriculum.
- The management team and all staff should undertake a regular and rigorous process of analysing attainment data in order to inform planning for future learning of pupils.
- In order to increase attainment and achievement, target-setting should be undertaken for all pupils in language and maths.
- The school should closely monitor and track pupils’ learning, motivation and experiences in order to support and increase attainment and achievement.

**Learning and Teaching**

Forward plans are in evidence for each area of the curriculum with evaluations to be completed by staff.

- Daily plans are in evidence to supplement and expand forward planning.
- Praise is used effectively by most staff and the contributions of pupils are valued.
- Some teachers make good use of new technology.

Forward and daily planning should be reviewed to show more clearly what pupils are expected to learn.

- The school should promote active learning, investigations, research and problem solving and encourage pupils to take more responsibility for their own learning.
- In order to address the needs of all pupils, differentiation requires to be addressed in some classes.
- The school requires to develop its approaches to formative and summative assessment and record keeping both formally and informally across the curriculum in order increase pacing and attainment of pupils.
- In order to make the learning environment more stimulating and motivating for pupils, more displays of their work, particularly writing, in classrooms and open areas would further encourage the children.
- The nursery should ensure the organisation of the playroom promotes creativity, purposeful learning, investigation and independence for the children.
- Planning, tracking and profiles should be reviewed in the nursery class.
- The school should review the practices of colouring in, early finishing exercises and use of worksheets across all stages.
- A school policy should be developed for the presentation of pupils’ work in jotters and workbooks.

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**Support for Pupils**

- Staff have a very good knowledge of the backgrounds of the pupils and are alert to their emotional and social needs.
- The recent changes to the behaviour policy and resultant action plan, in addition to the planned positive play policy, will improve behaviour and motivation of pupils.
- The support for learning teacher, who is knowledgeable and enthusiastic, provides very good support for pupils.
- There is very good liaison with an extensive range of partners and external agencies in order to support pupils.
- The early intervention nursery nurse, classroom assistants and additional needs assistants are very skilled and provide very good support to the work of the school.
- A good range of out-of-school learning activities support and encourage children.
- Good arrangements are in place for the induction and transfer of pupils from the school to Ayr Academy.

- The class contact hours of children at the early stages should be increased to 25 hours per week.
- All staff in the school should take responsibility for improving the behaviour, work ethic, attitudes to learning and motivation of all the children.
- The early intervention nursery nurse, classroom assistants, additional support needs assistants, and cluster support staff should be deployed more effectively by senior managers and class teachers in order to assist in raising attainment of pupils.
- The school should review support for learning in order to establish a policy, procedures and processes.
- Nursery/primary curricular liaison should be developed to ensure a more appropriate curriculum for pupils in P1.

**Ethos**

- The Pupil Council is giving pupils more responsibility and experience in consultation and decision-making.
- The school assemblies, house system and reward scheme encourages confidence, effort and behaviour of pupils.
- The pupils have developed their awareness of the difficulties experienced by others through their work to raise funds for charity.
- Parents are very supportive of the work of the school and a good start has been made to increasing parental partnerships through eg. parental workshops.
- The recent increase in the level of parental communication has given parents more information about the work of the school.
- There are good initiatives including play-along maths and story sacks to encourage parents to engage with their child’s learning.
- Communication within the school is good and the newly purchased interactive voting system will enhance pupil and parent consultation.
- P3 pupils are encouraging P1 pupils in literacy by reading stories to them.

- All staff should raise their expectations of pupil attainment and promote the wider achievements of all children.
Resources

The school has extensive and spacious accommodation for its needs.
The school is very well staffed by the authority.
The school foyer is attractive and welcoming to visitors and parents.
The planned improvements to the staffroom and school office will make staff feel more valued and facilitate better administration.

The school should review its use of accommodation to ensure that all space is well used for the benefit of children.
The school should undertake the central organisation of resources and remove outdated and worn materials from classrooms, cupboards and central areas.
The authority, in consultation with the school should ensure that the cleaning specification is appropriate, health and safety issues are resolved and that outstanding fabric and maintenance work is undertaken.
The internal school courtyard should be developed by the pupils to encourage enterprise and active learning.
The school should make more use of the open areas for co-operative teaching and active learning and investigations by pupils.
Staff development and advice should be provided for staff on learning and teaching, promoting positive behaviour, language, maths, classroom management and organisation, planning, nursery management and motivation of pupils.
The Authority’s policy on Professional Review and Development should be implemented.

Management, Leadership and Quality Assurance

The new head teacher is approachable, enthusiastic and has a vision for the development of the school.
The management team are committed, motivated and work well as a team.
The teaching staff are experienced, supportive of one another and very willing to embrace change and take the school forward.
The clerical and support staff work hard and are very supportive to the ongoing work of the school.
The new format for weekly management meetings will facilitate focused discussions and closer monitoring of developments.
The recent analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats by staff has highlighted many areas for development.

The management team requires to monitor closely learning and teaching, forward planning, progress and attainment of pupils and support for learning, and work with the authority to secure improvements in these key areas.
The management team should undertake co-operative teaching in order to disseminate good practice, assist in staff development and monitor the experiences of pupils.
The school should develop self-evaluation of learning and teaching using the HGIOS framework.
The school should revise its aims and develop policies for all areas of the curriculum in order to guide the work of staff.
Attainment data and statistical information about the school

1. 5-14 attainment levels - percentages of pupils attaining or exceeding appropriate levels by the end of P3, P4, P6 and P7

5-14 Reading

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<th>2004/05</th>
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<td>69.0</td>
<td>60.5</td>
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<td>83.0</td>
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5-14 Writing

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<tr>
<td>Newton Primary</td>
<td>58.3</td>
<td>37.3</td>
<td>57.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>South Ayrshire (Primary Schools)</td>
<td>75.4</td>
<td>73.4</td>
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5-14 Mathematics

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Newton Primary</td>
<td>67.8</td>
<td>58.2</td>
<td>72.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>South Ayrshire (Primary Schools)</td>
<td>83.8</td>
<td>85.2</td>
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2. Attendance and exclusion levels

Pupil attendance (percentage)

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<td>Newton Primary</td>
<td>92.23</td>
<td>92.99</td>
<td>92.84</td>
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<tr>
<td>South Ayrshire (Primary Schools)</td>
<td>95.32</td>
<td>95.62</td>
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Pupil exclusions (number of incidents)

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<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td>South Ayrshire (Primary Schools)</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>54</td>
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Pupil exclusions (½ days lost)

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<tr>
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<td>31</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>43</td>
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<tr>
<td>South Ayrshire (Primary Schools)</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>285</td>
<td>182</td>
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3. Information about the school (2005/06)

Pupils information

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of pupils</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of classes</td>
<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Average class size</td>
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Staffing information (full-time equivalent (fte) levels)

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Head teacher</td>
<td>1 fte</td>
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<tr>
<td>Depute head teacher</td>
<td>1 fte</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal teacher</td>
<td>2 fte</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>9.4 fte</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom assistant</td>
<td>4 fte</td>
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<tr>
<td>ASN assistant</td>
<td>90.5 hours per week</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clerical assistant</td>
<td>57 hours per week</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nursery nurses</td>
<td>2 fte</td>
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<tr>
<td>Janitor</td>
<td>1 fte</td>
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