

FALKIRK COUNCIL
Education Services

Dunipace Primary School and Nursery Class



Standards & Quality Report Session 2008/2009

Dear Parent/Carer,

As you probably know, each year the government and the Council publish information designed to show how well schools and local authorities are improving pupil performance year on year.

In similar fashion, we in Dunipace Primary School and Nursery Class would like to tell you how we are progressing in our school. This leaflet has been designed to do just that. It is our “Standards and Quality Report” for last session.

Inside, you will find a brief description of our main achievements during last session. Whilst we do many things in the course of a year, we have focused on what we consider to be the most important areas. I have outlined the school’s main priorities for next session.

I hope you find the leaflet helpful. If you have any questions about it, please do not hesitate to phone the school office for an appointment. I will be pleased to offer clarification.

Robina McAnish
Headteacher



What we achieved in 2008/09

- A significant priority for this session was to enhance and promote transition procedures, including continuity and progression in active learning within the context of 'A Curriculum for Excellence' for children moving from the nursery class into Primary 1. The Primary 1 teacher had spent a substantial amount of time in the nursery learning context towards the end of the final school term familiarising herself with the children, their interests and the learning experiences they selected. This key factor and considerable ongoing consultation with nursery staff allowed the Primary 1 teacher to firmly incorporate the children's interests into responsive planning for the learning and teaching areas, resources and activities and experiences for the children in August. This 'child initiated' approach ensured a smooth transition and maximised the impact of learning. This phased approach alongside teacher initiated and directed learning and teaching activities builds on the valuable foundation of active, experiential learning, a familiar learning approach for the children and gradually introduces other approaches incrementally ensuring that dramatic change of approach is not detrimental to children's learning, confidence and security. This approach was shared with Primary 1 parents early in the new academic session encouraging ongoing partnership working for the benefit of our youngsters. This work will be built on next session as an integrated component of the nursery/primary1 transition process.
- Once again this session we continue to make further positive progress in the area of ICT.
 - The school website was completely revamped in consultation with all stakeholders. The website is extensive with information relating to a wide variety of school information, all classes from nursery through to Primary 7, School Events, Working with the community, Eco, Pupil Council, House System, Parents' Association, Parent Council and many other areas. You can see for yourself at www.dunipace.falkirk.sch.uk
 - The website can now be updated fairly quickly and Mr French has a school website 'Pupil Group' who meet regularly to help agree and develop ideas for the site, giving children ownership of this important means of community communication. The website will continue to evolve next session and we welcome feedback to allow us to continue to make improvements.
 - Mr French has now fully trained the nursery staff in the use of Qwizdom voting tools and each area of the school now has ready access to this resource to be used within varied learning and teaching contexts. Qwizdom continues to be used for regular 'Spelling Bees, Times Tables Tests, summative topic assessments, questionnaires, and teachers confidence continues to develop in using this technology and the children find it a highly motivating way to learn.
 - Interactive whiteboards are also used on a daily basis to enhance learning and teaching for our young people, and teachers have become more skilled and confident in using this interactive learning approach across the curriculum.
 - As part of a cluster transition initiative our Primary 7 teacher has represented the school to begin the review of ICT Technology to ensure robust integral links to Curriculum for Excellence are developed. A good start has been made to this development which will continue into the next session.
- Another key priority was to continue 'Curriculum for Excellence' development, piloting 'Joining The Learning' topics: The Unsinkable Ship, The Magic Castle, The Very Important Bear and Fairyland. Some of the children's work relating to these topics has been displayed on the website under classes P6, P5, P7 and P2. Primary 6 parents were invited to an open afternoon to share a wide variety of learning outcomes from The 'Unsinkable Ship' Miss Gordon said, 'The Unsinkable Ship experience was enjoyed by every pupil in my class. They delighted in reliving events from the past and got entirely caught up in the creation of Titanic in the classroom. Team work and problem solving became a must in order to successfully complete the challenges they set.'

Primary 5 have been full of enthusiasm for their topic 'The Magic Castle'.

Mrs French said 'The children have enjoyed working together to transform the classroom into a 'Great Hall' of a castle. They were particularly enthusiastic about designing and making the fixtures and fittings for the room. The children are very excited about sharing their work with the infants and their parents.'

Primary 7 were highly motivated and engaged in their topic 'The Very Important Bear'. Mrs Crerar explains 'The group discussed and decided on a famous movie to remake starring Buddy Bear, producing a storyboard and lists of characters, costumes and props needed. Work began on making costumes, backgrounds and writing scripts, rehearsing how the scenes will be made. Filming began! Titanic, Peter Pan, Grease, Indiana Jones & Superman. The groups designed posters to advertise the films, tickets for the P4-6 audience and popcorn bags for the premiere. Finished films will be published on class blog – p7dunipace.edublogs.org.

Primary 2 participated in a topic called 'Fairyland'.

Mrs Rigby said, 'P2 really enjoyed the Fairyland storyline. There was great excitement each time a letter arrived with an avalanche of replies from the children in return. It encouraged a lot of co-operative work and the children were eager to write. They were sad when the dragon finally said goodbye. The class still ask if the dragon is coming back!'

The topics have been an overwhelming success, promoting co-operative, active and creative approaches to learning, effectively integrating the principles of Curriculum for Excellence and promoting the four capacities. Do visit our website and the p7 Blog at p7dunipace.edublogs.org. Next session we will introduce further Joining The Learning topics across all school stages.

- We also set out to revise or forward planning formats for Social Subjects and Science in line with Curriculum for Excellence. The social subjects planners and framework was completed prior to the Easter break and class teachers piloted these for planning purposes in the summer term with very favourable feedback. Unfortunately the Curriculum for Excellence Science Group had to review the outcomes and experiences and we did not have the final document until the end of May therefore we have been unable to develop our school science topics as a result. This work will therefore continue in session 2009/10.
- Our application for Green Flag status is hopefully imminent. A tremendous amount of progress has been achieved in this area over the session. Miss Gordon our Eco Co-ordinator, her representative school committee, including staff from all areas of the school and parents, and our Eco Crew audited progress early in the session and agreed an Action Plan to maintain embedded work on litter and recycling, composting and energy reduction. Regular activities like 'Walk to School' were promoted and involvement with local partners 'Community Green Initiative' were developed. The Eco Crew also participated in 'Communities along the Carron' project led by C&M Community Consultants Ltd.

A substantial project for the whole school community was the development of a school vegetable garden for all classes from nursery to Primary 7. The garden plans became a reality as a result of grant funding the Parents Association applied for from the Scottish Community Foundation, P.A funding and school fundraising throughout the year. On the website you will be able to view the transformation of our garden from start to present day, including pictures of the varied vegetables grown by all the children. Our garden space is large and we hope to develop it further in the months and years to come. The children are voting for an appropriate name and once the cosmetic work is completed over the summer holiday period we hope to arrange a special opening ceremony organised by the Eco Crew. Alongside the garden we intend to create an outdoor classroom area with continued support from the Parents Association. This will allow classes to work outdoors in fine weather and provide a seating area for al fresco lunches if pupils choose.

- This session we planned to work in partnership with the Denny Locality Team led by Marion Gilhooly the 'Locality' manager. Marion's team comprises a Social Worker,

Community Nurse, 3 Family Support Workers, Community Education Worker all working in partnership with the school base police officer. The team assist delivery of integrated services for young people and families in the Denny Cluster area. Our locality colleagues have worked with a number of children and families in our school. The impact for these children and families has been a positive one giving appropriate direct support and advice to help families through change as effectively as possible. The Locality Team has had a high level of involvement in the transition process for Primary 7 pupils moving on to secondary school this session. Varied support has been offered to ensure individual children's needs were addressed. Several parents have provided positive feedback regarding provision for their children, and this allows improvements to be built into the service for the future.

Our priorities for 2009/10....

- Teachers planned effectively to deliver the 'Creating Confident Kids' emotional resilience programmes, and 'Aiming for High' with Primary 7. This had to be slowly phased as we were awaiting publication of some of the component units for 'Edinburgh City Council'. Next session we will fully incorporate this approach and resources into our 'Health and Wellbeing', Personal, Social and Citizenship programme for all classes P1 – P7. We also intend to include relevant topics in our school assembly programme to ensure whole school implementation and maximum positive impact for children.
 - The refurbishment of our school open areas, teachers' base and reception area was finally completed with support from Falkirk Council. The teachers' base had streamlined cupboards installed with suitable desks for the DHT, PT and another for general use. The fresh paint and new carpet make this room more fit for purpose. The upper area was painted and a new carpet fitted. Considerable streamlined storage and two teaching/learning areas have improved the area for learning. The infant area has been repainted and storage greatly improve planning to maximise the conservatory and open space for active experiential learning. A new information communication system was provided for the administration area along with matching new filing cabinets and storage cupboards. All of this work improved storage and areas for teaching and learning, and teachers regularly have areas meetings to agree the best use of space for children, to plan areas and display to create attractive, inspirational learning contexts fit for purpose.
 - The nursery team has successfully created a sensory garden area within their designated outdoor space. There are a range of aromatic plants and herbs, wind chimes, windmills and suitable seating areas to respond to the nursery children's interest in gardening activities and promote meaningful learning within several nursery curriculum programmes. The nursery children have also greatly enjoyed developing their vegetable garden and watching their plants grow. I'm sure our new entrants to the nursery will enjoy the opportunities the gardens bring.
- To provide continuous professional staff development for teachers relating to De Bono's Thinking Hats approach to promote children's selection and use of a variety of thinking/learning strategies to encourage them to plan, solve problems, generate ideas and seek solutions within a variety of learning contexts. Teachers will receive 3 professional development sessions from an authority trainer in September.
 - To implement 'Big Writing' which is an approach based on sound assessment of children's starting points to developing their writing skills, and 'Text Detectives' which is a collaborative learning approach to the development of critical literacy skills in children, thus ensuring Curriculum for Excellence outcomes and experiences encouraging all our pupils to reach their potential.
 - Teachers will participate in 'Teacher Learning Communities' to further embed the use of formative assessment strategies into classroom practice using Professor Dylan Williams' C.P.D. programme. Continued improvement of teaching practice will promote children's learning and progress.
 - Continue to develop the 'Curriculum for Excellence' with all school staff, building a curriculum framework to show how the curriculum will look with discreet areas of study and cross cutting, interdisciplinary themes, with particular emphasis on the areas of Numeracy, Language and Health and Wellbeing this session. We intend to develop outlines and new planners to ensure children are engaged in learning which is relevant, interesting and challenging.
 - Continue to maintain and further develop the school's Eco initiative and make application for 'Green Flag' status early in the session. Continue to promote all classes participation in their class vegetable gardens and develop an 'outdoor' classroom with help from the Parents' Association, to be used for teaching and learning, and pupil recreational use.
 - The nursery team plan to implement their recently devised Science Policy/Guides which is coherent with Curriculum for Excellence. This will involve responsive planning linked to children's interests, experiences and opportunities which allow them to interact with their environment and with the planned activities developed by staff. The newly devised themes will be appropriately presented to ensure quality learning for the children.

How did our pupils perform?....

Attainment		2005/6	2006/7	2007/8	2008/9
Reading	Dunipace PS EA	86%	91%	98%	90%
		84%	85%	85%	
Writing	Dunipace PS EA	80%	87%	93%	84%
		81%	81%	81%	
Mathematics	Dunipace PS EA	85%	93%	99%	96%
		87%	88%	87%	

(Note : EA = Average for all Falkirk Council Primary Schools)

The percentages above show the overall number of pupils who have reached national standards appropriate to age and stage. Although overall attainment has dropped slightly in all three areas from the previous school session, we had anticipated reduction in levels as a result of school circumstances. Attainment continues to remain at fairly high levels, above or on the authority's average.

A number of factors have had an impact on the school's performance this session. Each year the school's attainment is calculated using the attainment data from four classes: P3, P4, P6 and P7. This year the classes at these stages have a higher number of children with additional support needs who have Individual Educational Plans which detail short and long term targets, and the level of support required from the Support for Learning Teacher and Support for Learning Assistants to promote sound progress. For many children with identified barriers to learning the curriculum has to be elaborated and divided into smaller parts, with considerable reinforcement and consolidation of targets thus promoting pupil success, albeit at a more moderate pace. This means that this group are unlikely to reach national standards of attainment within the guidance time frame indicated.

Prior to this session the school's staffing allowed us to deliver Focused Writing Groups, a targeted tuition for individuals and groups where a more intensive, small group approach permitted us to offer support to promote skills, knowledge and understanding where gaps had been identified, in a more supported, intensive approach. This support depends upon available staff above normal school complement, and with long term staff absences, vacancies and 'acting up' roles this has not been sustainable for this session. One other factor which had some impact at the upper stages has been a number of pupils transferring into the school leaving little time for us to close the gaps in learning and inevitably progress for those individuals.

We have identified as you can see from our priorities a number of initiatives to address ongoing improvement.

At almost all stages there has been consistent improvement in pupil attainment levels much earlier than curriculum guidelines, despite an overall drop in attainment.

At Primary 1 stage 32% of children have already attained Level A Mathematics; and 23% Level A Reading which is quite a significant result.

At Primary 2 stage 96% have already attained Level A Mathematics; 58% attained Level A Writing and 71% Level A Reading before the end of the school session.

At primary 3 stage 34% of pupils have attained Level A in Reading and 52% have already achieved Level B. In Writing 69% of Primary 3 pupils have attained Level A with 21% attaining Level B ahead of guidance and 7% attaining Level C. 100% of Primary 3 pupils have attained Level A in Mathematics with 41% attaining Level B ahead of schedule.

In Primary 4 89% have attained Level B Reading, 89% have attained Level B Writing and 7% attaining Level C almost 2 full years ahead of guidance. 96% have attained Level B Mathematics.

52% of Primary 5 pupils have already attained Level C Reading, 26% have attained Level C Writing and 35% have attained Level C Mathematics over a year ahead of requirements.

In Primary 6 54% of pupils have attained Level C Reading with 42% already attaining Level D. In Writing 73% have attained Level C and 15% attaining Level D ahead of schedule. In Mathematics 81% attained Level C with 15% attaining Level D.

In Primary 7 59% have attained Level D Reading and 40% Level E in this curricular area. In Writing 57% attained Level D, one reason we will be focusing on 'Writing' support at the upper stages next session. In Mathematics 53% attained Level D and 40% attained Level E ahead of guidance.

High levels of early attainment continue to be evident at some stages, giving an indication of continuous improvement in our raising attainment strategy. The assessment analysis shows we clearly have more to do in some areas, particularly writing and we will take this forward through our school improvement priority action plan.

Robina McAnish
Headteacher