



Review of progress made by

EAST END PRIMARY

November 2009



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this review was to evaluate the progress made in addressing the issues for improvement that were identified at the time of the school's last evaluation in November, 2008 and to assess the effectiveness of those areas now.

The review team comprised:

- Pachent Smythe, Senior Evaluator, (lead) -ESAU
- Mary Bowerman, Acting Director- ESAU
- Favourita Blanchard, Evaluator - ESAU

Team members spent two days in the school. The issues identified for improvement at the time of the last evaluation a year ago were:

The effectiveness of leadership and management so that there is a strong focus on:

- Monitoring and evaluating provision and practice throughout the school
- The quality of teaching and learning and standards of achievement
- Effective planning for the implementation of the National Curriculum and all current national initiatives
- The behaviour of students in lessons and their attitudes to learning

The four main areas for improvement all required strong and focused leadership and management. Although the action plan did not specifically address the issue of leadership and management, the fresh direction for the school provided by a new principal with vision and determination have enabled the school to make progress in all these areas.

The review team gathered evidence in the following ways:

- Twenty-one lessons or parts of lessons were observed, mainly in language arts and mathematics, but including most subjects offered
- School documents were looked at
- Students' work was looked at during lessons and members of the team listened to students read
- The review team observed one whole school assembly, break and lunch times and after school activities
- Discussion took place with the learning community leader, principal, teachers, other members of staff and some parents

The school was asked to complete its own assessment of progress before the review took place.

MAIN FINDINGS

The principal, staff and members of the Department of Education Services (DES) worked on the school's action plan following its evaluation. Members of the DES also worked along with the principal and deputy to begin to monitor teaching and learning. At the time of the six-month progress check, some of the proposed plans were beginning to be implemented, but there had not been very much progress, as a number of them were not scheduled to begin until September 2009.

A new principal was appointed at the start of this school year. She worked with staff and parents to build on what had been started. She has, in a short time, determined the priorities for moving the school forward. Working closely with the deputy, she has amended an older version of the school's mission statement which more clearly reflects the school's aims, and written a new vision statement. These have been shared with and agreed by staff and parents. Communication and relationships with staff and the wider community have been restored. Parents now have a visible

presence in the school and are showing their support by making physical improvements to the site.

The action plan has been amended to drive forward the school's priorities. Monitoring procedures have been established in order to raise standards of teaching, learning, achievement and behaviour, and some new curricular initiatives have been introduced.

There is now a positive and supportive ethos. Staff expressed the fact that they feel valued as they have a part to play in the development of the school, and they are working well together. Leadership and management are now good. Staff have had an opportunity to reflect on what they have achieved so far, and are pleased with the new direction of the school.

Evaluators use the following grading scale to describe aspects of a school's work:

Grade	Description
1	Very good
2	Good
3	Adequate
4	Unsatisfactory

Issues for improvement	Evaluation of progress made in addressing the issue for improvement	Overall effectiveness of each of these areas now:
Effective leadership and management to provide a strong focus on monitoring and evaluating provision and practice throughout the school	Good	The effectiveness of the monitoring and evaluating of provision and practice throughout the school: Adequate
Effective leadership and management to provide a strong focus on the quality of teaching and learning and standards of achievement	Good	The effectiveness of improving the quality of teaching, learning and standards of achievement: Years 1-3 -adequate Years 4-6 unsatisfactory
Effective leadership and management to provide a strong focus on effective planning for the implementation of the National Curriculum and all current national initiatives	Adequate	The effectiveness of the Implementation of the National Curriculum and national initiatives: Literacy block - adequate Numeracy strategy – unsatisfactory PYP not started
Effective leadership and management to provide a strong focus on the behaviour of students in lessons and their attitudes to learning	Adequate	The effectiveness of improving the behaviour of students in lessons and their attitudes to learning: Adequate – years 1-4 Unsatisfactory – years 5-6

PROGRESS MADE IN EACH OF THE AREAS IDENTIFIED FOR IMPROVEMENT:

A strong focus on...

(1) Monitoring and evaluating provision and practice throughout the school

At the time of the evaluation in 2008, there was no clear management structure to provide effective accountability for the work of the school. Some lesson observations were done by the principal but subject coordinators were not involved in monitoring teaching and learning in their areas and were not clear about their roles. Although the school received frequent visits and advice from the learning community leader, few of the suggested changes were implemented and little progress was made.

The new principal used the evaluation report, progress report and the action plan to decide on priorities. A clear direction for the work and development of the school was quickly established and monitoring procedures were put in place. Teachers were assigned to lead subjects and job descriptions were updated, agreed and signed. Staff are now clear about their roles and responsibilities. There is a schedule for formal observations and feeding back to staff; the first of these sessions was recently completed. Daily 'walk-throughs' by the principal provide a general overview of work in the classrooms. When necessary, she provides in-class support or teaches a class if a teacher is absent.

All students were assessed at the beginning of this term, in reading and mathematics, using the DRA (Diagnostic Reading Assessment), and MaLT (Mathematics Assessment for Learning and Teaching) respectively, as there was limited data on students' performance. Teachers used the results of these tests to better understand the level at which students were working. Parents received a copy of the report.

Staff have been given the opportunity to say what they feel is working well and what still needs to be improved. This information provides a better understanding of the kind of support that teachers need. The work of the visiting primary specialist teachers is monitored by the principal. They complete an attendance folder which they hand in after their sessions, provide feedback on the students they have taught and recommend any necessary follow-up.

Considerable progress has been made since the start of this school year. The focus on monitoring provision and practice throughout the school is now good. Many of the initiatives have the potential to ensure significant improvement.

Progress made	Current level of effectiveness of monitoring and evaluating the work of the school
Good	Adequate

Recommendations

- Ensure that 'walk-throughs' are more focused so that weak areas are identified and followed up
- Ensure that teachers' plans are closely monitored and that objectives are clear and measurable.
- Develop a policy on marking and assessment to ensure consistency and effective tracking of students' progress and use of the National Curriculum attainment levels
- Ensure that teachers use performance data to help them plan to meet the needs of different students

A strong focus on...

(2) The quality of teaching and learning and standards of achievement

This has been a priority of the new principal and the following are some of the developments that have taken place this term:

- Teachers were allocated to classes where she felt their strengths would be most useful
- The daily 'walk-throughs' were initiated to provide an overview of classroom practice and also to provide support to teachers
- A new format for lesson planning was provided
- Formal lesson observations have been started
- Subject leaders were appointed who are to help with the monitoring of teaching and learning in their subject
- Baseline tests were carried out in reading and mathematics to enable teachers to plan more effectively to meet the needs of students
- Additional subjects such as dance, gardening, and swimming were added to the timetable
- After- school support has been made available for students who need extra help

The school has maintained the strong start in Reception that was noted at the time of the last evaluation in November 2008. The allocation of teachers has been more successful in improving standards of achievement in Years 1 to 3 than in Years 4 to 6, where much of the teaching is unsatisfactory at present.

Teachers have been given a new and simpler lesson plan format, but where teachers used only this, lessons seemed to lack direction and focus, as the plan does not encourage links with prior knowledge or the setting of clear objectives.

In lessons that are well planned, students are clearly motivated by the range of relevant and interesting activities and work well together with a good understanding of the routines expected by the teacher. This is especially evident in Reception and Years 1 to 3. In Years 4 to 6, there are too many instances where vague lesson planning and insecure subject knowledge hinder students' progress. A narrow range of teaching methods and slow pace result in much time being wasted and it is clear that students are not interested or motivated. In some classes, behaviour management is weak and rules are ignored.

Teachers have used various assessment tests such as the DRA and the MaLT to identify students' attainment levels in reading and mathematics respectively. However, there is not yet an established procedure for tracking students' progress, and teachers have only a general idea of students' strengths and weaknesses. The majority have no

evidence to help them to plan to meet the needs of individual students or to set targets for improvement. Teachers do not yet have a firm understanding of how to assess and report on students' progress using the National Curriculum attainment levels.

The daily 'walk-throughs' by the principal are not yet focused enough to have a great deal of impact, and the subject leaders have not started their monitoring role. Both of these initiatives have the potential to help to improve the quality of teaching and learning as specific support can be provided where it is needed, and teachers can be held accountable.

Progress made	Current level of effectiveness of improving the quality of teaching and learning and standards of achievement
Good	Years 1 to 3 – adequate
	Years 4 to 6 - unsatisfactory

Recommendations:

- Ensure that there is closer monitoring in order to provide support where there is inaccurate subject knowledge or weak behaviour management
- Provide opportunities for teachers to plan with the class above and below theirs, using the curriculum maps to ensure progression of skills
- Revisit the lesson plan format to ensure that it is more helpful
- Provide training in assessment for learning and especially in the tracking of students' progress
- Provide training and support in using the National Curriculum attainment levels

A strong focus on...

(3) Effective planning for the implementation of the National Curriculum and all current national initiatives

The school has recently made an effort to develop its curriculum by including gardening, dance and swimming. However, sometimes lessons in these subjects have to take place during the literacy or numeracy blocks, and this means that students do not always receive the required amount of time for literacy or numeracy. There is no indication that the work missed is made up.

Curriculum maps have been produced for social studies, religious education and science, but teachers are not using them consistently in their planning.

Teachers have appreciated the help and advice provided by the literacy coach, and are making an effort to establish the literacy block as required. However, several of the teachers are still not comfortable with the rotation of group work and some lessons are not as effective as they should be, as much time is wasted.

Teachers are experiencing great difficulty with implementing the numeracy strategy. They have not had much support with this and are unsure of what they should be doing. Most are not yet comfortable with 'Abacus Evolve' and even though this programme

includes the activities to be used with the lessons, materials for the activities and games are unavailable and teachers spend a lot of time trying to make these. A few teachers have a better understanding of the programme and are able to plan lessons and teach effectively. However, for others, sometimes plans are taken straight from the Abacus planner and these are not adapted to meet the needs of the students in the particular class, or teachers have not taken the time to become familiar with the intended outcomes. This results in lessons that have little direction, and not enough learning takes place.

Although the school had started preparation for the PYP (Primary Years Programme), the decision was made to defer its application for status as an IB (International Baccalaureate) candidate school as it was felt that there was much groundwork still to be done before another new initiative could be carried through.

Progress made	Current level of effectiveness of implementation of national initiatives
Adequate	Literacy block - adequate
	Numeracy strategy - unsatisfactory
	PYP not started

Recommendations

- Ensure that teachers receive help in the use of ‘Abacus Evolve’
- Plan for students to make up work missed when doing dance, swimming or gardening, or rearrange the timetable
- Continue development of curriculum maps and ensure that they are effectively used
- Monitor more closely the implementation of all new initiatives to ensure that students benefit from activities planned

A strong focus on...

(4) The behaviour of students in lessons and their attitudes to learning

Students’ behaviour is now adequate in most lessons although at the top end of the school some students are openly defiant and rude. The school has amended its behaviour policy/ code of conduct, but this is not being used consistently.

Progress made	Current level of effectiveness of improving behaviour of students in lessons...
Adequate	Years 1 to 4 – adequate
	Years 5 and 6 - unsatisfactory

Recommendation:

- Ensure that the code of conduct is followed consistently by all teachers

Progress in other areas identified by the school

The Parent-Teachers Association is working closely with the school. They have made a 'grow box' for each class and some crops are already underway. They are also working on restoring and refurbishing the old pre-school building so that students can have a resource building for practical activities such as cooking, baking, etiquette, table setting, sewing, science experiments and other life skills.

The new arrangement for lunchtime is working well, with Years 1 to 3 eating in the enclosed foyer and Years 4 to 6 in the open area.

Students get a thirty minute break each day. The first fifteen minutes is used for eating their snack and the rest of the time for games and fun. Teachers encourage all students to play.

Issues identified as strengths of the school at the time of the last evaluation:

- Students get a very good start in Reception
- Staff are committed and hardworking
- The school maintains a welcoming, attractive environment

The school has maintained these strengths.

Conclusion

Progress has been made in all the areas identified as needing improvement. Leadership and management are now strong. The principal has a clear vision for how to improve East End Primary and has established a range of systems and structures to accomplish this. Her first priorities were to establish a positive ethos and good communication with staff, parents and the wider community, so that all stakeholders would work effectively together. It will now take some time for the full effectiveness of these initiatives to be seen.